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**Daya Krishna special**

**Guest Editor : Asha Mukherjee**

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## *Contents*

### ARTICLES

Surajit Barua	
Daya Krishna on Knowledge and Understanding	1-12
Prasenjit Biswas	
Daya Krishna's Mirror of 'Transcendental Illusions': A Critical Perspective	13-28
Priyedarshi Jetli	
Daya Krishna Tells the Truth about Lying: Platonic Methodology of Daya Krishna	29-40
Samikshya Gohain	
Tradition and Science: Perspectives of Daya Krishna and Karl Popper	41-50
R. C. Sinha	
Daya Krishna on Value Awareness	51-56
Ram C. Majhi	
Reflection on the Distinction Between the Active and Contemplative Value	57-62
P. R. Bhat	
Daya on Alternative Perspective on Indian Philosophy	63-74
Godabarisha Mishra	
Daya Krishna on <i>Adhyāsa</i> in Sāṃkhya and Advaita	75-86
Shraddha Pai	
<i>Yajña</i> and the Doctrine of <i>Karma</i>	87-98
Meenal Katarnikar	
Analysing the Dimensions of <i>Bhakti</i>	99-108
Asha Mukherjee	
Daya Krishna's Critique of Bharata's <i>Rasa</i> Theory: Aesthetic Experience and <i>Adhyāsa</i>	109-126

SPECIAL ENTRY:

R. S. Bhatnagar Philosophy and Daya Krishna	127-136
OBITUARY: Nilima Sharma	137-139

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## Daya Krishna on Knowledge and Understanding

Surajit Barua

### **Abstract:**

During his long illustrious academic career, Daya Krishna has written extensively on various topics of philosophical interest, both from the Indian and the Western philosophical point of view. This article is an attempt to (1) explicate some of his radical views on knowledge, and (2) show the coherence of his views with a recent trend in contemporary epistemology. The idea is to demonstrate that his views on knowledge were ahead of his time and he should be regarded as the trendsetter in the new subfield of epistemology of understanding. The scope of knowledge, as he understands, is not exhausted by the western conception of propositional knowledge. Epistemology is obsessed with truth/falsity of propositions which inevitably leaves out acknowledging those instances of knowledge which are not directly truth-evaluable (such as the objects of art and history). Besides, he points out, the notion of truth/falsity and its application in various contexts is itself in need of explication. Several other features of knowledge are missed when we confine ourselves to propositional knowledge only. Knowledge, as commonly understood, has an open-ended character and subject to continuous revision, modification, extension, and emendation. This article argues that his views on knowledge can be easily accommodated if understanding replaces knowledge as the most privileged epistemic entity, and knowledge is considered as a species of understanding. Understanding has only recently gained currency among epistemologists as a cognitive achievement or success that needed to be studied for its own sake. Thus, Daya Krishna had the vision to think of knowledge in broad terms, ahead of his contemporaries although he did not develop his ideas in great detail or explicitly termed his version of knowledge as understanding.

**Keywords:** Knowledge, Understanding, Truth, Daya Krishna.

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## 2 Daya Krishna on Knowledge/GUJP 5

Daya Krishna conceives knowledge differently than the way it is conceived in western epistemology. He advocates a version of knowledge in which truth is not a necessary condition for knowledge and offers several reasons in support of his view. Firstly, according to him, non-declarative statements, which are neither true nor false, still convey some knowledge. He says,

Imperative or injunctive statements are an example of this in moral and legal contexts ... truth, in the usual sense, is inapplicable to them and if they are considered as subjects for study and discussion and regarded as knowledge in some sense of the term, then that knowledge cannot be considered as true or false. ("Knowledge" 142)

Secondly, he claims, even the possibility of determining the truth value of a declarative sentence is in a sense logically restricted by its definition. On one hand, when declarative statements happen to be truly universal, that is consisting of an indefinitely extensible conjunction of singular statements, no one can claim it to be true as even if one of the conjuncts is false, the whole conjunction shall be false. On the other hand, if someone asserts a particular declarative statement, then his claim to knowledge cannot be dismissed as false. This is because such a statement cannot be proved to be false as it is constituted of an indefinitely extensible disjunction of singular statements.

His point is that if determination of truth value were necessary for knowledge, then no claim to know a universal declarative sentence can be accepted. Likewise, no claim to knowledge of a particular declarative sentence can be rejected. But these consequences are unacceptable for, there is a subset of universal declarative statements consisting of true singular statements which conveys information about actual state of affairs. Anyone who has understood the meaning of the universal declarative sentence and believes it to be true might be in possession of this information (of the state of affairs represented by its true conjuncts each of which are true singular statements). A similar argument holds good regarding knowledge of particular statements. Therefore, truth value of a universal or particular proposition cannot constitute a necessary condition for all types of knowledge about the state of affairs represented by such propositions. The truth value of only singular statements can be determined with some degree of certainty. But Daya Krishna reminds us: "no one considers a singular statement as an example of knowledge" ("Knowledge" 142).

To be precise, he does not deny that truth is central to propositional knowledge. His concern here is that the epistemologist should not be preoccupied or obsessed with it. We need to explore and question whether propositional knowledge or truth is the primary epistemic good or is there something else which is a better representation of the folk usage of the term 'knowledge'.

The discord between truth/falsity and knowledge is not the only issue he raises about epistemology.

Contemporary epistemology makes some untenable presuppositions regarding the object of knowledge. We think that we apprehend truth (reality) when

we gain knowledge. But the knower and his attempts at knowing reality are themselves a part of reality. This raises the question about whether the object of knowledge has an independent reality of its own and whether the knower really knows what he claims to know. Daya Krishna writes,

The problem with the predicates “true” and “false” is that one just does not know what they exactly mean, and whether they can even be meaningfully applied to all domains and discourses without exception. A little change in the nature or type of object to be known radically affects not only what is to be. (“Knowledge” 142)

The verb ‘to know’, as it is understood in contemporary epistemology, is to be in a certain cognitive state with respect to a certain state of affairs, when that cognitive state obtains *due to*<sup>1</sup> the fulfilment of certain conditions. But cognitive grasp of any state of affairs is a function of (1) the peculiar biological constitution the subject has, and (2) his/her conceptual scheme which decodes the input as that state of affairs.

Here, (2) needs some explanation. Suppose a subject receives some sensual input.<sup>2</sup> This input is not *seen* identically by all subjects even if their biological constitution is similar. For example, a scientist and a layman will not interpret a natural event identically. We do not see individual objects in isolation. So, I do not merely see a chair here or a table there. I observe an event. This allows me to make certain judgements regarding the truth or falsity of some propositions. The understanding or interpretation of a given entity as a certain state of affairs depends on the frame of reference of the agent/subject. Even where two agents agree on the interpretation of the state of affairs under consideration, they may differ on its truth-value if they are in different frames. Consider for analogy this example: Suppose two agents are travelling by car at different speeds. They see another car passing by. Now, both agree that the third car is speeding away. But they differ in determining the speed of that car. So, a claim such as “The speed of the third car is 65 km/hr” might be true for one agent but false for the other.

Analogically, the truth value of a proposition which claims to represent a certain state of affairs can be assessed only with respect to an explicitly stated or implied frame of reference. Bereft of a frame of reference, the application of predicates ‘true’ or ‘false’ to an input of the cognitive faculty of the subject is meaningless/invalid. Even if the input is objective, its interpretation and assessment by the subject is not. Propositional knowledge, at least partly, is a function of such interpretation and assessment. The implication is that propositional knowledge does not constitute ‘knowledge of reality out there’ because of its functional dependence on the notion of truth/falsity. Truth values, as we have concluded above, are always assessed with reference to the frame or system of the agent/subject. Thus, there is ground to believe that the epistemologist has to look beyond propositional knowledge in order to respect our intuitive understanding of knowledge. Note that this view is not identical to the Buddhist claim of emptiness of all conceptual frameworks. The claim here is limited – that subjective conceptual framework is inevitable; one cannot



transcend all frames of reference and look down below to some state of affairs. However, Daya Krishna is quick to point out that it is an illusion to think that “the so-called presentation (to consciousness as the object of knowledge) has no ontic reality of its own, independent of the facticity of its being known” (“Definition” 145).

His point is that there is a tension between two senses of the object of knowledge: in the epistemological sense, they are all objects of consciousness (and therefore, they are constructions of the subjective conceptual scheme or frame of reference of the knower). In the ontic sense, they enjoy a mind-independent reality of their own (and so, somehow transcend the individual, subjective frame of reference of the knower). These two senses are in contradiction, he says, since in the former case,

[T]he presentation exhausts what there is without any residuum whatsoever. In the latter case, the object is never exhausted by any of its appearances and thus *demand*s to be known, a demand that is insatiable and inexhaustible. (“Definition” 145)

That is, the object that is supposed to be out there (the object that is to be known) somehow *transcends* both the object of our perception and the object of our thought, conceptualised through our language. What can be known via any one conceptual scheme or frame of reference is at most an appearance of the object but there are other appearances of the object (if at all it has a mind-independent existence) which cannot be captured from within the frame of reference of the knower. This means that the enterprise of knowledge is an unending course. Knowledge of an object is never final. Daya Krishna explicitly states, “Knowledge, it is forgotten, has an open-ended character and subject to continuous revision, modification, extension, and emendation” (“Knowledge” 143).

This leads to a difficulty in defining knowledge and explicating its conditions. Contemporary epistemology seems to have ignored or failed to take notice of this simple fact. If it did, it would realise that no model of knowledge can be Gettier-proof. That is, attempts to come up with a set of necessary and sufficient conditions of knowledge are bound to be frustrated. Daya Krishna notes further that the objects of art and history too “demand to be understood and known like everything else, even if their knowledge be different from that which is sought in respect of those that have little to do with man as they are not his creation” (“Definition” 147).

Here the point is that objects of art and history are purely man’s creations, and we can claim knowledge of these objects. But knowledge of such objects is qualitatively different from knowledge of natural objects, i.e. state of affairs because unlike the latter, the former can be evaluated for goodness or badness or rightness or wrongness. Knowledge of an object of art or history is not exhausted by mere description of some event. It also includes the ability or capacity of the knower to *evaluate* the artistic object or the historical event under consideration. Propositional knowledge does not capture the power of evaluation of the knower.

Thus, he is sceptical of the contemporary western epistemological trend of (1) treating propositional knowledge as the only type of knowledge worthy of being

studied and (2) attempting to formulate the necessary and sufficient conditions of knowledge.

He raises other issues as well. For him, knowledge itself can be treated as an object of knowledge. He says, “even knowledge has to be known, understood, interpreted, disputed, debated and discussed” (“Definition” 147).

However, this idea of treating knowledge itself as an object of knowledge is not well-argued for. There is a distinction between the concept of ‘knowledge’ and the verb ‘to know’. The concept ‘knowledge’, like any other concept for which man has a label/name, can be understood, debated, disputed. But concepts can be vague or ambiguously applied even within a linguistic community. The fact that concepts are created and classified by communities in accordance with their own conceptual framework makes it even more doubtful that universal standards can be applied across communities to test the knowledge of a concept. Since truth value cannot be assigned to isolated singular objects, it is meaningless to claim knowledge of an isolated object. Concepts are also, in a sense, isolated singular objects and therefore, they too cannot be ‘known’ in the propositional sense.

Epistemic entities like ‘knowledge’ and ‘belief’ are concepts too and so, what has been argued above for concepts in general hold for knowledge as well. Therefore, one can know without grasping or identifying the conditions of knowledge and one can believe without understanding the concept of belief just as one can act legally without knowing anything about the law of the land.

Understanding a concept and predicating it have different epistemological implications. Unlike the former, the exercise of predicating a concept upon an individual is a candidate for knowledge. The difference is similar to that between the correctness of a rule of a game and correctness of application of that rule in a particular match. It is meaningless to talk of the correctness of a rule<sup>3</sup> in isolation. You can only evaluate whether that rule has been applied correctly in a specific, particular game or not. The talk of correctness of the application of a rule in a particular instance is meaningful even when the rule itself is vague or open to interpretation. Suppose you show that a particular rule is vague. That is no argument to deny the meaningfulness or efficacy of deliberating whether, on a particular instance, that rule has been correctly applied or not. Knowledge is like a rule of a game. You can only evaluate whether knowledge obtains or not if the instance of its application is specific or determined. The concept of Knowledge itself does not determine any specific instance of its application. Hence, like the indeterminacy of the correctness of the rules of a game in isolation, knowledge of knowledge is indeterminate. Perhaps Daya Krishna would say that ‘knowledge’ is similar to ‘run’. One can run but one can also run in a run. Thus, it seems, run can be the object of running. But I think this is a ‘surface similarity’ – an equivocation which is common in natural language. It is an accident that the event of the sports of running has the same name as the act of running. Thus, it is doubtful whether such examples can motivate a belief in the objectual character of knowledge.

Moreover, one prominent characteristic of propositional knowledge is that, unlike belief, it does not come in degrees. So, you either know or you do not know; on the contrary, you can believe strongly or weakly. The difficulty in treating correct application of concepts as instances of knowledge is that the outright nature of knowledge cannot be accounted for. One reason for this is that many of the concepts we use are vague or open-ended. That is, one can come up with instances where it isn't clear whether it is correct to apply a certain concept in a certain expression or not. For example, consider the term 'heap'. How much quantity of sand one must have in order for it to qualify as a heap of sand, rather than a lump? Such concepts, it appears, do not have a well-defined scope or necessary and sufficient conditions for their application. So, the correctness of their application in borderline instances is undetermined. But propositional knowledge cannot admit of such indeterminacy since it is inextricably linked with the notion of truth/falsity.

If Daya Krishna's insistence that knowledge itself (or for that matter any concept) can be the object of knowledge is correct, then it is more reasonable, it seems, to substitute propositional knowledge with 'understanding' as our preferred vehicle of progress in epistemology. There are several reasons why the notion of understanding is closer to Daya Krishna's view about knowledge and its characteristics. We will discuss these subsequently. Here, we note that unlike propositional knowledge, understanding comes in degrees; it has an open-ended nature. Understanding of an issue is never fully complete and it may change. So, the vagueness or contextual nature of meaning of a concept is not incompatible with the nature of understanding; there is no reservation in claiming that one understands a certain concept, including that of knowledge.

Thus, it seems that Daya Krishna's conception of knowledge is different from that which is popular in mainstream contemporary western epistemology. Besides, exposing several limitations of our common conception of epistemology, as described above, he emphasizes two important, essential features which any account of knowledge should accommodate (but propositional knowledge fails): (1) Knowledge is an unending, open enterprise of man amenable to modification and (2) the object of knowledge itself is multi-dimensional and it is ever changing.

I propose that his views on knowledge can be easily accommodated if understanding replaces knowledge as the most privileged epistemic entity and knowledge is considered as a species of understanding. I think that Daya Krishna is a forerunner to the current realization in contemporary epistemology that 'knowledge' may not be the fundamental epistemic good.

It has dawned on epistemologists very recently that understanding is a cognitive achievement or success that needed to be studied for its own sake. Following Baumberger (368), we can identify the following reasons for this turn to Understanding from Knowledge: Firstly, science aims not at collecting discrete, isolated bits of information about the world but to understand it. Understanding does not always proceed through belief in true propositions only. We often use idealized

models for understanding. But idealized models involve falsehoods to simplify understanding. But such falsehoods are incompatible with the mainstream definition of knowledge which implies truth. Secondly, there is the so-called value problem of knowledge – we assume that knowledge has a special epistemic value not shared by other states which fall short of knowledge, such as true belief. But epistemologists struggle to find plausible grounds for this assumption.

Early proponents of understanding such as Jonathan Kvanvig argues that such a value problem does not arise for understanding:

[Understanding] is a construction out of true belief and subjective justification of a coherentist variety. Because both truth and subjective justification are valuable independently of each other and because neither value is swamped by the value of the other, we have the basis for an explanation of why understanding is more valuable than its subparts.... To have mastered such explanatory relationships is valuable because it gets us to the truth, but also because finding such relationships organizes and systematizes our thinking on a subject matter in a way beyond the mere addition of more true beliefs or even justified true beliefs. (205)

Similarly, Ernest Sosa distinguishes between animal knowledge and reflective knowledge. He puts the distinction like this:

One has *animal knowledge* about one's environment, one's past, and one's own experience if one's judgments and beliefs about these are direct responses to their impact – e.g. through perception or memory – with little or no benefit of reflection or understanding. One has *reflective knowledge* if one's judgment or belief manifests not only such direct response to the fact known but also understanding of its place in a wider whole that includes one's belief and knowledge of it and how these come about. (240)

The underlying idea about understanding is that the epistemic value of the whole is more than the sum of its parts. You are in an epistemically privileged position if you are able to combine pieces of information into a unified body; in doing so, you extract more value– over and above that of the individual, true propositions. Beyond the truth-requirement, what understanding amounts to, according to Kvanvig, is the internal seeing or appreciating of explanatory and other coherence-inducing relationships in a body of information. Note, however, that 'understanding' is used in common parlance in various senses but not all are relevant for our purpose. Here is a good clarification from Catherine Z. Elgin:

A coherent body of predominantly false and unfounded beliefs does not constitute an understanding of the phenomena they purportedly bear on. So, despite its coherence, astrology affords no understanding of the cosmic order.... Sometimes we say things like "Joe understands astrology," or "Paul understands mythology" or "Bill understands rationalism", meaning only that the epistemic agent knows his way

around the field. He knows how its contentions hang together, and is adept at reasoning within the framework that they constitute. This sort of understanding neither has nor needs a tether to the facts. One can understand a theory in this sense regardless of the theory's fidelity or lack of fidelity to the facts. This sort of understanding is a genuine cognitive achievement, but not the one that concerns us here. (36)

Thus, coherence and facticity are both crucial to understanding.

I have mentioned above that Daya Krishna laments the failure of propositional knowledge to account for our knowledge of arts and history. Understanding offers promise in this regard. A belief in an isolated historical information may not be epistemically justified (and therefore not the right candidate for propositional knowledge). Yet, the believer may have understanding of a historical event by grasping explanatory connections involved in the large body of information possessed. That is, although knowledge is incompatible with a certain kind of epistemic luck, understanding is not. This means that understanding, unlike knowledge, need not be Gettier-proof. It also implies that there is always a scope for modification and improvement in the level of understanding, even with respect to the same subject and object of understanding.

Moreover, for understanding, it is not enough that explanatory and other coherence relations should obtain between the various beliefs; there is also the psychological requirement that the agent/subject should *grasp* the coherence relations. But the psychological act of grasping admits of degrees. Some subjects may grasp the relationships better compared to others even with similar cognitive constitutions. This implies that understanding is dynamic even if the object of understanding remains the same. Thus, it naturally fits into Daya Krishna's radical view of knowledge: "[K]nowledge seems to grow incessantly and become more and more complex and complicated even when the object that is claimed to be known seems to remain the same" ("Definition" 149).

The cumulative character of knowledge implied in the above passage can be explained in terms of objectual understanding. One can never have a complete understanding of the object because every object has multiple aspects and since our cognitive capacity is limited, no one belief can incorporate information about all aspects of the object. Thus, there can be various levels or degrees of understanding the same object. Elgin distinguishes three dimensions along which understanding can vary: breadth, depth, and significance (39). A student might have some understanding of the Battle of Plassey but her professor of Indian history has a greater understanding on the topic, plausibly on all the three dimensions. The professor might have a broader understanding of the battle, being able to embed his coherent body of true beliefs into a more holistic understanding of history of India's struggle for independence. He might also have a deeper understanding. In that case, his body of beliefs contains more propositions, and/or more non-trivial inferential connections between propositions. The student and the professor might differ in their

understanding of the significance or weight of the battle. Thus, understanding clearly admits of degrees due to its features which Daya Krishna also ascribed to his version of knowledge.

There are other issues highlighted by Daya Krishna which can be dissolved by accepting understanding as the primary epistemic entity. The doctrine of essential qualities for example, presents a challenge to the traditional conception of knowledge. Distinguishing, discriminating, and evaluating awareness of the object of knowledge becomes difficult if the definition of the object is vague or open-ended. Even otherwise, in general, knowledge ascriptions which relies on definitions of objects have an inherently ad-hoc nature as pointed out by Daya Krishna:

[There is] arbitrariness in the choice of what shall be taken to count as the defining property or power or capacity of the object, as it is that in which knowledge about it is supposed to consist.... Definitions do change.... Does it imply that what we considered as essential was not essential and that what was supposed to be knowledge of the object was not knowledge, even though we thought of it as such, and taught and acted on it? ("Definition" 150)

Objectual understanding does not amount to matching definitions of the object with the corresponding information obtained about it. One can have understanding about the object by discovering connections between the various bits of information about it even if full propositional knowledge is absent.

Another issue is the connection between knowledge and action:

The crucial question perhaps is whether the idea of knowledge can even be thought of without involving some sort of activity intrinsic to it and varies with the type of knowledge that it is.... Knowledge always requires some sort of activity, even if it be only of attending which is minimally required in any knowing or learning process, as it itself is a part of the process, a resultant of some previous activity of knowing and giving rise in its own turn to further knowing and thus engendering a chain which may be broken at any moment, but which is unending in principle. (Krishna, "Definition" 146)

Daya Krishna's observation is remarkably similar to what proponents of understanding claim about its action-orientation:

Someone who knows geometry, for example, knows all the axioms, all the major theorems, and how to derive the major theorems from the axioms. You can acquire this knowledge simply by memorizing. But someone who understands geometry can reason geometrically about new problems, apply geometrical insights in different areas, assess the limits of geometrical reasoning for the task at hand, and so forth. Understanding something like the Athenian victory is not exactly like understanding geometry, since the applications and extensions are more tentative, the range to which insights can reasonably be applied is more restricted, the

evidence for a successful application is empirical (and may be hard to come by), and so on. But in both cases understanding involves an adeptness in using the information one has, not merely an appreciation that things are so. Evidently, in addition to grasping connections, an understander needs an ability to use the information at his disposal. (Elgin 37)

The above passage is a clear endorsement of Daya Krishna's claims mentioned in the passage preceding it. Daya Krishna also crucially emphasizes on a not-so-tight relationship between knowledge, as interpreted by him, and truth:

There is, and can be, no finality in knowledge and hence its claim to truth can only be in a sense in which truth is not generally considered as true. Normally, truth is supposed to be both infallible and complete and yet knowledge, that is human knowledge, can never be so.... Knowledge is certainly true, but this truth is always bound to be less than that of which it is supposed to be knowledge. ("Definition" 151)

Objectual understanding captures this intuition. Several epistemologists now believe that a factive conception of understanding is unduly restrictive. Elgin, for example, argues that scientific understanding is not completely factive (33). Genuine understanding of scientific theories may involve ineliminable felicitous falsehoods. These falsehoods are idealizations, simplified models – they do not correspond to reality and are therefore, false. But she points out, they are felicitous in that they afford epistemic access to matters of fact that are otherwise difficult or impossible to discern. Understanding remains factive even after including such false idealizations because accommodating the evidence (i.e. answering to facts) is a requirement on an entire theory or comprehensive body of information, not on each individual element of it.

It is remarkable how this view reinforces what Daya Krishna asserted independently years back, as stated in the preceding paragraph. Elsewhere he writes: "Without imagination no human knowledge is possible ... can one conceive of consciousness without the capacity for imagining and can imagining be conceived of without the idea of deception or deceiving?" ("Illusion" 176).

The reference to imagination and conscious deception as a means to knowledge acquisition is an acknowledgement of the indispensability of modelling and idealizations (which are felicitous falsehoods) in enhancing understanding on some issue. Notice that this article was published in 2003, a year before Elgin published her views on the issue.

In the concluding remarks in one of his articles ("Definition"), Daya Krishna beautifully assesses the impact of our obsession with propositional knowledge. He argues that we are often under the *illusion of finality of knowledge* – of having grasped the truth about the object (153). The certainty instilled in our consciousness by this illusion prompts us to conceive the object in terms of its propositional knowledge, i.e., in terms of its definitions (even though knowledge through definitions/essences is actually inadequate since it is ever changing and never complete). Subsequently, it is



the definition that begins to determine what object shall be correctly designated by that name or word. “Definitions constitute knowledge and knowledge determines the way reality is seen, and the way reality is seen determines the way men feel and behave towards it” (“Definition” 153).

This, I believe, is a remarkable realization; one that is similar to Thomas Kuhn’s revelation of scientific progress as somewhat of a social construction. Daya Krishna is against uncritical acceptance of reason and the belief or faith in rational knowledge (read propositional knowledge).

In conclusion, there should be no doubt that, like in almost all major branches of philosophy, Daya Krishna made a path breaking contribution to contemporary epistemology through some remarkable insights on the very nature of knowledge itself. He had the vision to foresee the contemporary turn in epistemology from understanding to propositional knowledge. However, he did not specifically give a name to his broad interpretation of knowledge. That is why his contribution to the sub-field of understanding remains unrecognized, which is unfortunate.

### Notes

1. If the relevant cognitive state obtains accidentally, even when the conditions are not fulfilled, then that state can be defeated by subsequent experiences. Therefore, the cognitive state proper to knowledge must obtain *only due to* the fulfilment of the conditions of knowledge.
2. All inputs may not be sensual. Some can be mathematical facts or inferences drawn from previous beliefs.
3. Strictly speaking, one can talk about correctness of rules without referring to their application in a particular game. But that can be done only with respect to the relation between two or more rules or one rule and its relation with other facts. For instance, one may say that rule S and rule M cannot both be correct because they are mutually logically inconsistent. But one cannot claim that rule S (or rule M) is correct in isolation. Thus, in such cases too, we refer to state of affairs – whether they obtain or not.

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## Daya Krishna's Mirror of 'Transcendental Illusions' A Critical Perspective

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**Abstract:**

Daya Krishna turns Kant's notion of 'transcendental presuppositions' of knowledge into something inessential to understand the sense of the real, as real is a relation between senses, imagination and the ideal element involved in them. So Daya Krishna substitutes transcendental presuppositions by a kind of creative illumination that transfigures the world by freeing thoughts from limits of cognitive abilities. Such freedom of creative illumination and imagination is metaphorically termed as creative illusion by Daya Krishna. So, transcendental illusion is better described by 'creative illusioning' as an enactive process of feeling-relationship in Daya Krishna.

**Keywords:** Transcendental Illusion, Creative Illumination, Creative Illusion, Feeling-Relationship, Immanence, Aporia.

Daya Krishna considered the notion of 'transcendental illusion' in a quite different way than Immanuel Kant, who coined the phrase to mean our subjective connection to concepts for determination of phenomenal character of objects in the world. In other words, for Kant, phenomenal character of objects arises from the realm of concepts. For Daya Krishna (DK), the illusory and transcendental character of human realm of concepts and our conscious connections with it is a kind of omnipotent power that merely facilitates bringing one back to the 'realm of the real' (*Towards a Theory* 152). Real, for DK, is material reality of the body that is *opposed to* other centres of consciousness. This opposition itself, for Kant, is the outcome of transcendental dialectic, which incites in humans a "logic of illusions" (A293/B350). The illusion of conceptual character of subjectivity is held on by human subjects to 'regulatively' provide principles and concepts to capture the material reality.

Seemingly the material *as* phenomenal and material *as* empirical create a double bind for operation of reason, consciousness and awareness of concepts. The problematique of phenomenal-conceptual-illusory on the one hand and reality as 'attended' by an aware mind and body on the other maintain a strict dialectical tension as a metaphysical duet, while they can functionally meet in the form of 'intending' the real to which the conscious 'attends' to. Intending and attending are two prongs of the functional meeting between phenomenal and the real. DK emphasizes on the functional correlations between 'intending' and 'attending', instead of its metaphysical basis. For a philosophical understanding of dialectic between phenomenal and real, DK deploys a mirror of transcendental illusion, which assumes a reality of its own and plays out in the connection between conceptual and real.

The problem at hand for this paper is drawn up from DK's mirroring notion of transcendental illusion of consciousness and an attempt shall be made to understand how such an illusion goes into constituting value in terms of our creative work as well as in terms of human relations in the world.

### **An Overview on Illusions**

Opposed to Kant's 'transcendental illusion', DK formulated a notion of 'structural illusion' to describe how illusion takes a structural form by committing a mistake of turning thought and action into categories, robbed of their freedom that is intrinsic to both thought and action. The basis for DK's counterposition lies in his a non-substantivist notion of self, which DK compared with a flowing river that changes. Structural illusion arises from thinking that the self is a transcendental unity and its categories of thought are organically constitutive of that unity. The entire Kantian idea that because of transcendental unity of the self, it is able to know, think and act in a manner of justifying such acts of knowledge based on some self-legislated principle,

for DK, is itself a grand structural illusion that subsumes the world under the self, and it is a necessary outcome of what Kant presupposed as formal unity of self-consciousness.

DK contrasts such a grand unity between self and its knowing apparatuses with the existentially driven nature of human freedom that bases itself upon the necessity of 'being', which is a transcendental concept that lies beyond experience of the substance-quality relation, as Kant conceives of it in categorical terms. Such conceptual unity between being and self or unity of consciousness in terms of thought and action is what Indian system of Yoga was inspired to achieve teleologically. DK's critique of unity between being and self subliminally points to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika's argument that the relation between substance and quality cannot be apriori 'evidential' and 'concluding' despite the *vyāpti* relation that might obtain between them. Indeed as a refutation of both Yogācāra and Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika's substantivist view of unity between the knower and the known, irrespective of the fact whether the knower has a soul or not, DK's reading of Kant incorporates a large critique in an anti-foundationalist manner that points to the fallacy of a substantivist notion of self and its faculties of understanding and reason, which, for DK, leads to an infinite regress towards one after another transcendental apriori categories. Going by this, DK, remains critical of Indian tradition of rendering subject-object relation as an expansion of what is given in thought as a relation by examining whether such a relation is based on what is real.

This real, for DK, is the high point of structural illusion, as such a 'transcendental apriori' borne out of unity of self-consciousness is *negated* in the domain of human freedom and in the domain of relation between human desire, will and values. For DK, freedom and desire are the double binds that arise as an indispensable dual in human thought and action. So what is held as real in human thought and action is really real if it can establish that 'freedom' not bounded by casual or any other determination is experienced by the human subject as part and parcel of the relation between thought and action. So DK is interested in understanding the nature of 'relation' that constitutes 'real'.

This brings out a larger ontological question of understanding how relational becomes real and vice versa in the domain of 'freedom' as a value. In other words, one cannot make a common all subsuming structure of thought and reason that can bring together knowledge and will, action and value, desire and freedom in a teleological means-ends relationship. To put it another way, the perpetual incommensurability between the so-called constitutive elements of formal-transcendental unity of self-consciousness remain unresolved in Western Philosophy, especially when we start looking at the notion of Other. The supposed resolution of the difference between subject and object as in various schools of Advaita, for DK, is a kind of

structural illusion, as nondifference or unity between both presumes pure or absolute consciousness, a state that DK cannot commit himself to in a theoretical or ontological sense. DK confers an epistemic status to such illusion of absolute consciousness or transcendental unity of consciousness by ironically positing an as-if possibility of knowing the illusion and believing it as an instance of *māyā*.

Going further in examining the epistemic understanding of *māyā*, DK picks out *vyāpti* relation that cannot cover the Other, as the Other cannot be enclosed and entangled in *buddhi/manas/śarīra* complex (*Towards a Theory* 164). Instead of *vyāpti* relation that is supposed to obtain between act of knowing and the quality that is captured in such acts, it is the universal concomitance that obtains between understanding and givenness of a phenomenon that is either just causal relation or a presupposition of any act of knowing. Both these universal concomitances and presuppositions of knowledge are non-substantive for DK, as the state of knowledge itself is nothing more than an illusion under such circumstances.

How does *mokṣa* work then? Hermeneutic circularity of *māyā* is another concern for DK, as illusion creates an illusion of knowledge, which is itself the claim of knowledge due to our metaphysical thesis about transcendental unity. For DK, both *māyā* and *līlā* are forms of non-attachment that endures cessation of suffering with the possibility of an 'absolute unrelatedness' to anything whatsoever (*Towards a Theory* 110).

The temporal order between 'givenness', 'manifestation' and 'knowing' is itself causally ordered for DK, which by itself, is also a transcendental presupposition; the givenness of the given as a causal necessity is itself a presupposition for causality, which no epistemological interpretation can save from becoming a problem in understanding the very nature of human thought (*Towards a Theory* 21). Going by this DK uses this Occam's razor in producing a knock down argument, "the so-called categorical structures involved in activity of thinking can only be seen as "given" in thought when one tries to understand it" (*Towards a Theory* 110). The given in thought is like entanglement in *buddhi/manas/śarīra* complex. DK raised *two* interesting problems here: the unreality of consciousness and as a consequence the non-existence of reality outside consciousness and in a correlated way, the question of freedom and creativity as co-determined by outer/outside dependence on others or on the 'roots' and 'forms' that creates a structural illusion of 'freedom'.

Seemingly DK depends on a metaphysical return to a causal theory of co-origination of freedom and creativity as they are simultaneously manifest in both freedom and in an illusion of freedom. It is here that metaphysically an act of creativity becomes a creative illusioning that can never free itself from the structural illusion of self-consciousness and its regress towards givenness in thought and consciousness.

The transcendental apriori in Kant's system remains the faculty of imagination, but DK points to structural limitations of human awareness as well as human action and hence what transcendental critique cannot resolve could be resolved by using the terms 'structural illusion'. But DK leaves open an explanation of how transcendental illusion is structural illusion, on which one needs to explore further, as if there is an explanatory gap or aporia between transcendental illusion of unity of self-consciousness and structural illusion of an all knowing self.

As an allusion to the above, one may refer to Jayanta Bhaṭṭa's notion of self being both subject and object without any *karma-karṇvirodha*, which DK would not admit, as he is not an Advaitin, although he, in a way, endorses what he called *śānta* (*Towards a Theory* 112). In a sense any teleological argument produces a structural illusion of a unity of self-consciousness, which, again is, a byproduct of a hermeneutic presupposition of the unbroken presence of self as a subject of knowledge. Then what is the nature of knowledge? Can knowledge go by the name of knowledge?

### **'Creative Illumining' and 'Radical Immanence'**

Daya Krishna's creative illumining involves a critique of the notion of 'reality' in terms of a fundamental ontological split between 'subjectivity' and 'freedom'. This idea is elaborated in his powerful philosophical treatise on illusion (*Towards a Theory* 152). The idea of subjectivity as a conceptually structured being for Daya Krishna points to the possibility of willing, desiring or knowing, which in its every instance is interpreted by using language. Such a subjectivity is an enactive reflection on an already reflected and known world. It is here that acts of subjective mind involves acts of desiring, willing and such other states of emoting that can re-describe the world in new ways, creatively and affectively. Creative illumining is this process of creativity that represents, redescribes and reorients the known world into different forms through creation of myriad of relations between beings on the one hand and entities on the other. Daya Krishna described this possibility of relations as a "transcendental structure of understanding" (*Towards a Theory* 26). The transcendental structure is embedded in what is presupposed as transcendent to our knowledge of being or entity. Daya Krishna alluded to Kant's elaborate "Transcendental Analytic" in putting forward the claim that something is transcendently presupposed to make it possible what appears as 'given' in experience (*Towards a Theory* xii). Daya Krishna's quarrel with Kant lies in disputing Kant's claim that a critique of reason or judgment does not impact the transcendental presuppositions, which for him, is a major source of establishing free agency of humans, which Kant denies by posing transcendental presuppositions of space and time. Daya Krishna puts the terms of his critique of Kant's anti-critical



stance of transcendental presuppositions from the point of view of practical reason by stating,

The Kantian framework thus cannot, in principle, provide for any principle of order in the world of human action if it accepts the free agency of other human beings in its system. (*Towards a Theory* 19)

In other words, practical reason demands treatment of every human being as equally rational moral beings, which cannot be reduced to an abstract universal and necessary moral order based on pure form of objects without plurality of free human agents. Daya Krishna takes this critique of Kant to free “imagination from the bounds of sense” such that the “relation between the senses, imagination and the ideal element involved in them” (*Towards a Theory* 84-85) is the source of creation of a variety of ‘worlds’. Daya Krishna describes these worlds as products of willing and desiring while inhabiting this world itself, while metaphysically, the output of such desiring and willing “illuminate ... the human situation” (*Towards a Theory* 97). Such a human situation does not get limited by structures of imagination, sense and judgment, as Daya Krishna argued for how self-consciousness create a ‘value’ by interfering in reality as well as transform the self as a free agent by “free movement of consciousness” (*Towards a Theory* 120).

To put it succinctly, Daya Krishna, in his critique of Kant, demonstrated the limits of faculty of reasoning and judgment that works through senses, concepts and free conscious agency of the self or the subject and provided an alternative of creation of worlds that are available to others, intersubjectively (see Biswas 164-72). This availability of worlds created by one’s self for others is a kind of world free from transcendental presupposition or illusion of self-consciousness. Such worlds are open to a consciousness that can get rid of illusoriness of self-consciousness and open up an ‘expressive’ or ‘communicative’ relation between humans. This is Daya Krishna’s way of qualifying transcendental presupposition of knowledge as necessary for ‘experience’, while meanings attached to these experiences are not given in consciousness but they arise in communicative functions of language. Going by this illusion itself attains a meaning in language, although it operates at the level of senses. In other words, Daya Krishna removes the gap between transcendent consciousness and experience or phenomenal reality and brings reality as immanent in the relationship between sense, imagination and language. The question is, if one does not admit transcendental role or structure of consciousness, how does one access the relationship between self-consciousness and reality? Apparently Daya Krishna takes reality to be free from illusion, a foundational distinction deployed in Indian systems like Advaita.

The question is, to what extent, Daya Krishna would concede the immanence of phenomenal reality that denies anything transcendent? Daya Krishna produces a novel argument about the nature of being in phenomenal reality that does not admit divide between knowledge and reality (*Towards a Theory* 131). Daya Krishna picks up an Advaitin fragment of denial of any such thing as knowledge of reality to drive home the point that reality enjoys “epistemological independence” and possibly even “ontological independence” on which no methodological interpretation be superimposed (*Towards a Theory* 135). As such an interpretation is necessarily superimposed so denial of illusion, ironically enough, brings back transcendent character of givenness and fails to come to terms with the indefinite multiplicity of others (*Towards a Theory* 146-47). This indefinite multiplicity again gives rise to feeling of bondage as dependence on others remains undeniable (*Towards a Theory* 147). The undeniability of others’ presence and freedom that underlies this consciousness of others in one’s self-consciousness makes Daya Krishna advocate a contradiction and dilemma between knowledge and action.

The questions that arise at this point are ontological in nature. Is it the case that consciousness necessarily involves consciousness of the Other, without which self-consciousness cannot exercise its hold? DK answers it in the positive by stating that ‘realization of dependence on others’ is also simultaneously ‘being caught’ in other’s web and also in the web of one’s own consciousness. Indeed this is an ontological dependence between self and other at the level of consciousness, which seems to be foundational in DK’s understanding of ‘finality’ of any spiritual seeking of truth and knowledge. Such a notion of ‘finality’, for DK, is not only embedded in the activity of thinking, but it arises from activities like ‘artistic creation’ or even in *upāsana* of the Upaniṣadic tradition. DK goes onto show that such ‘finality’ is trans-linguistic, though such ‘finality’ does not help in reducing the ‘structural illusion’ created by the extremely indeterminate relationship between “I” and the “real”. DK exemplified this indeterminacy by way of alluding to fact that there is no finality to even acts of withdrawal from attachment, as nonattachment can itself be an obsession for some, from which one cannot seek freedom. Seeking freedom in full knowledge of withdrawal opens up this very act of withdrawal to another deeper level of attachment to inevitability of withdrawal, which is generally known as ‘asceticism’ (*Towards a Theory* 152). DK’s posing of this problem of freedom of the ascetic as a case of our knowledge of character of freedom that paradoxically gives us a sense of bondage in being dependent relationally with other’s freedom, as well as our own pursuance of a path of an inevitable detachment as a commitment or obsession or dependence, which arises as the other side of the so called freedom that ascetics fail to understand.

Only an intervention by subjectivity arises as we take knowledge and understanding together as the human tendency is to formulate knowledge in an one sided manner without taking into account the feeling relationship that an activity of thinking generates structurally, while it goes onto produce an illusion of freedom. Knowledge here remains at the root of illusion of freedom, while a limited knowledge of freedom itself cannot give freedom from dependence on a purported knowledge of freedom as in ascetics. DK cites the case of creation and impossibility of knowing the mind of the creator, which is both a challenge to sources of knowledge as well as to any possibility of freedom (*Towards a Theory* 153).

There is then a valuational indeterminacy created by an interplay between freedom and creation at the ontological or at the original first level knowledge of both freedom and creation to which any latter notions and categories of application of 'knowledge' and 'freedom' remains parasitic. DK poses this problem of deep rooted parasitism of freedom and knowledge in an originary first source that cannot be known anymore, while all latter recourse to freedom and knowledge not only betrays a full understanding of them as there is a recursive unknowable origination and infinite regress to asking 'is freedom itself free from all bondage and dependence?' and 'is the very act of knowing knowledge a kind of knowledge free of contingencies and impurities of material or ideological presuppositions?' In other words, DK discovers inherent limitations of knowledge and freedom as they get constrained by an appearance of reality, while the real of reality itself lacks substance except that it is a transcendental and structural illusion produced by ontological character of our pre-given ideas like knowledge and freedom.

### **Sense and Value**

A further case in point is DK's examination of our attribution of certain universal values to human knowledge and action. Values such as 'good', 'right' and an 'absolute' etc. are, for DK, judgemental in nature. Such judgmental values in DK's way of imaginative understanding of the reality considered as a mode of appropriation of the pre-reflective consciousness of the world. DK gives a tacit recognition to this position when he maintained that 'valuational' character of judgments about the subject-object relation assumes inter-subjective character and hence it is inductive and hence jibes with the lived dimension of human action. Such an appropriation turns out to be a surprising revelation of the experiences of pain, loss, joy or any other such state of existence. It is not only that the reflective consciousness of the world is modified by the pre-reflective in the form of a transformation of pre-reflective into reflective, but it also produces a "phenomenological datum" within any expressive, metaphorical, rhetorical and literary rendering of the experiential. Subjects of Reason undergo such a transformation in the realm of

human action in order to get re-constituted by self and other referring expressions that re-establish the link between the imaginary and the real without being delusive and illusory.

This brings us to explicate DK's position on the very status of representation of values in language, which can be reformulated thus: the trace of the other is intrinsic to every act of language, which is also the source of value in human language. DK reformulated 'trace of the other' as either 'real' or 'unreal' and combines trace of the other as both 'creative' and 'apprehensive' functions of consciousness (*Towards a Theory* 127 and *Civilizations* 66).

Iterability of values depends on repetition of the trace of the other as a way of making up for its absence by representing presence. This is what DK finds as an important derivation from the absent, illusory sense of creative valuation that represents something without ever being present, but persisting through a language of self-realization (*Towards a Theory* 127).

Assumption of presence of the 'mode' or 'context' merely opens up the possibility of first person knowledge that is irreducible to the context of the world; while DK opens up the contexts of the world to the grasp of the 'Other' located 'outside'. Both the 'Other' and 'Outside' are irreducible in linguistic rendering of thoughts and vice-versa. So the question about presence comes back in this form, *can the name trace itself as presence in the absence of the objects that are yet to come in language?* It does so by a transformation of the object into a possible relationship, the modality of which cannot be decided apriori. This is just like giving names to a secret that could be uttered in the absence of the "Other" or the inoperative presence of the "Other" as an object (*Towards a Theory* 156).

'Other' that signifies an absence and substitutes the presence or reference makes us stand in the passage from representation to reality. If one asks, what the reality of other is, the answer merely points to the aporia that is experienced in the representational and designating function of self-other relationship. DK formulated this aporia in terms of 'seeking' that evokes what DK called a "feeling-response" appropriate to the 'object that arouses it'. This is how DK thought the idea of Being to include idea of Non-Being as well, but such an inclusion cannot, for him, bridge the divide between 'knowledge' and 'reality' except by a strategy of denying one side at the cost of the other side as well. This leaves us in the grip of 'plurality' that does not ontologically require a self-conscious being. Without a self-conscious being, the reality of freedom assumes a shape just as colour is 'found in this or that form' and never just as freedom. DK posits a certain kind of overdetermination of freedom by consciousness seeking reality, which by itself does not lead to any specific sense of reality, but assumes a shape as present before a 'seeking' subject (*Civilizations* 65).

So the question returns, whether self/subject/other represent anything in the world or things in the world that appear to us with conditions of possibility? DK answers the question by undermining the possibility of transcendence through knowing, willing and acting etc. by positing an other in the acts of knowing the world, who merely simulates, imitates and responds in a formal way to the linguistic intimations of the world. Rather knowing the world in no way supplements the aporia of knowing the world the way it is. Therefore, the world appears as a figure of speech, a part of our knowing the name without the reality of naming the world. This is where DK conceives Knowledge as a problem of stating the 'problem', a problem of believing what 'beliefs' create. This is what DK called "self-fulfilling prophecy" (*Towards a Theory* 100).

DK's diagnosis of non-passage from abstract/conceptual to real without reinstituting the real on the other side of the world as 'freedom' opens up the possibility of language (*Towards a Theory* 140-41). This possibility makes name and world co-contextual to thought and on reflection/ascription thought can merely re-contextualize this prior entanglement in a different context and hence DK faces this problem of kinds: abstract names versus proper names. The re-institution of the real on the other side of the entanglement between name and world is an act of re-contextualization without reducing the initial condition of co-contexts. As Wittgenstein shows through his use theory of meaning the case in which a concept X would be what X is, while use differs and defers the meaning of a question like, "In what case would something be the same X as this X?" DK answers the question in terms of the role of consciousness in attending to something, which involves construction of an 'object' as well as paying attention or withdrawing attention from it (*Towards a Theory* 93-4). This never fixes the status of an 'object' just by being directed to the centre of one's consciousness, as the centre of consciousness is empty till it picks out or moves away from something, which is bracketed within its inner recesses. Without fixing the referent of the 'object' and the 'self', DK speaks about the acts of consciousness in this way,

There is, then, both an element of freedom and constraint in the capacity of consciousness to attend as there is always some commitment to both the object which is attended to and the purpose for which it is being attended to. (*Towards a Theory* 94)

DK conceives that such acts of consciousness can be brought under the concept of 'desire' that can be thought of creating 'a world as much as the forms of transcendental sensibility' (*Towards a Theory* 95). As we know desire postpones its satisfaction to keep itself alive and hence the 'world' created by desire cannot be spoken in ordinary language, but it should be grappled in a language of constitution, which is genetic. DK called it 'a marginal touch of

detachment' that does not fulfill desire in any manner and it also creates a 'tangential awareness' of what *cannot* be determined in a given world (*Towards a Theory* 102).

This is *non-re-institution* of real as origin in the use of language bringing back the phenomenon of transition from acts of desiring to the desired predicates and vice-versa. Linguistic philosophers' claim that predicates act as reference for the Subject marks an unwitting substitution of the subject by an attribute which is non-relational, which is a non-passage from supposed relationality between the subject and object *to* diverse alternatives and attribute somehow related indeterminately in or by a context, which might constitute a relation of the type of 'withdrawal-and-return of creative men of genius'. DK would have pointed here out that the thread between two problematic closures such as abstract and real remains as the basis of a Wittgensteinian 'family resemblances' between the word, the subject and the world (*Towards a Theory* 102). How is this parabasis located in the world? DK's answer is that there are two ways in which possibility as a norm could be deployed at the heart of language; one by a yet to come future and the other by waiting for some arrivant, which is a plan of action. Both these ways again mark the un-anticipable insertion of Subject in time, which in DK's language is an exchange of place between 'inclusion' and that which is included across the border of two problematic closures (*Towards a Theory* 100). This exchange of place is like exchange of hands in gift or giving, which is never an 'object' as treated in Kantian 'transcendental illusion'. The Kantian idea of 'transcendental' as the apriori conditions of knowledge merely acts as an insertion of Subject, which, according to DK is a 'problem to which there is no solution'. But exchange itself is a 'taking place', a place that is 'given' and 'taken', a verb that is an aporia – as it cannot not name itself, a name without a name. This comes close to what Derrida would say,

One must endure the aporia, if such is the law of all decisions, of all responsibilities, of all duties without duty, and of all the border problems that can arise, *the aporia can never simply be endured as such*.  
The ultimate aporia is the impossibility of aporia *as such*. (78)

DK endures the aporia of sense by declaring the impossibility of relating sense to something outside itself, that is outside the 'whole' produced by interrelationship between belief, behavior and reality (*Towards a Theory* 142). Does this wholeness of signs within language ensure sameness of reference so that this, in turn, will ensure sameness of value and sense? Do signs refer outside themselves, that is, outside signs? What is outside signs and values? The verb 'is' symbolizes that inherent negative dialectic that hits the foundation grounding claims of sublime with an absence or aporia, while it is being part of the *petitio principii* of defining 'sense' and 'value' (*Civilizations* 66).

DK applies this linguistic rendering of the world in the service of developing a sense of 'freedom', which is neither freedom 'from' nor freedom 'to', rather it is an abandonment of all teleological underpinnings. For example, DK considers the relationship between 'thought' and 'language' as not binding on each other, rather they are mediating upon each other. DK raises the question, can *upāsana* be called an action? Signs bring in this deflationary account of sense, while its claim of sense is in a relation of non-identity or difference with itself, which is an expression of freedom. This is also an aporia in thinking the outside of thought, which interestingly is a playful engagement with various available concepts. On this side lies the non-passage between sense and reference. This opens up the other side of an unsublatable negativity in the notion of meaning, which is DK's secret of transcendental Knowledge to which sense bearing subjectivity does an act of epistemic violence. If there is no truth beyond the truth that one does, DK is without that truth. Such a nature of truth is beyond circumscription of the border between anthropology and ontology. Foundationalist theories of meaning produce a 'dilemma' in the meaning-theoretic contents that seem to obtain in the language of value (*Civilizations* 25). The language of value is always indeterminate, as what is immanent in our value-consciousness is the so-far unrealized alternatives that do not depend on one's present choices. For DK, there are 'indefinite multiplicity of absolutes' that exclude others even when some of them are realized by someone (*Towards a Theory* 99).

DK overcomes this dilemma of foundationalist understanding of meaning by positing the value of aesthetic judgment as being *without* objective meaning (*Civilizations* 82). This 'being without meaning' is, for DK, neither *logos* nor *nomos* (*Civilizations* 82). It is the 'call of the beyond' that DK identified with the purpose of knowing the truth or *tattva* (*Civilizations* 83). Value, as it is posited through intentionality and in its manner of presentation remains a secret (*Civilizations* 78) within states such as 'privacy' or in the 'experience of the limits of a language', as famously stated by Wittgenstein (*Towards a Theory* 164) DK considered such experiences are *without* the 'sublime'. What gives the taste of the sublime is a feeling for it without revealing the 'secret'. Hence one needs to move beyond the 'transcendental illusion' of recovering the world from sense as well as open up the secret of sense 'without' the world.

What happens in such a starting point is that the very appearance of the world is a 'loss' of subjectivity. The *loss* of pre-reflective self-sameness in the event of torture and suffering establishes the non-relational disembodiment of intersubjectivity that ironically jibes with the constitutive othering of the 'social' (*Civilizations* 36). This act of othering always hinges on a preceding positional subjectivity that makes return to the political (in the sense of being Subject and par-taking) possible, while such a possibility opens up the process of becoming an other to oneself-the teleological elimination of the



Modern self-identity that is always living with a lost self!<sup>1</sup> It is at this disjunction between the posited self as the other and the othering of the self as a consequence of the return to inter-subjectivity as 'public' and 'political' that the *arche* of self-sameness faces its own extinction. DK celebrated this annulment of the other in terms of an absolute detachment and de-identification (*Civilizations* 37). This is a return to the memory of horror and loss of identity that doubles itself up in the contemporary experience of being disembodied in the social and the political, that is, into an other without a face. Sublimity and transcendence no longer 'recuperates' in this context of return, rather it only prolongs the loss that in the disjunction between the self and its experience.

### **The Dialectic between Self and Other**

This disjuncture is theorized in the non-passage between the self and the world, when the world re-appears as 'experiential' in the memory of the 'self' as the inevitable othering of itself in the disjunction between the past and the present. The trace of the past in memory gets progressively eliminated in the 'present' that marks dissolution of embodied Subject in the 'return to the political'. The theory and the praxis of politics merely re-establishes the circle of dependence between past and present by an institution of loss in the Subject, who attempts to recuperate it in the memory without the self or the sublime as the ground of Being. This 'return' to being is not merely "back to the past" (*Towards a Theory* 197), but to a past that lost its identity in the loss of the self to which it properly belongs, as the Self loses itself in the disembodied recollection of disrupted sublime that stands as the material phenomenology of the present (*Towards a Theory* 154).

It is at this material phenomenology of the present that the radical undecidability of the present from an infinite responsibility towards the other emerges in the global memory of the 'return to the political'. 'What is yet to come' is not a simple 'beyond', rather it is the radically undecidable end of notions like historicity, presence and responsibility. Radical undecidability involves "moments of togetherness", but "these are 'moments' only and one returns back to a lived situation where the other relapses into otherness once again" (*Towards a Theory* 157-8). This exploration into otherness through the radical escape of the other into 'othering' and 'otherness' denies the self-sameness of consciousness, as it bounces back with an altered state of consciousness, in which "the 'other' seems more 'subject' or 'self' than oneself.

### **Illusions of Otherness**

What emerges in the foregoing discussion by DK about the fundamental epistemic enterprise is threefold: 1) relationship between transcendental structure of consciousness and reality, (2) The revealed character of human existence as found in human action and (3) An ethical

predicament to return to the Other. These threefold relationships establish, for DK, a way out from 'well-known antinomies' that plagued Philosophy from its beginning. One such antinomy is the dialectic between 'freedom' and 'bondage' that arises in the very ontological situation of being and consciousness. The ontology is such that a centering of consciousness in an "I" gives it some amount of freedom in terms of the functions of consciousness as it is expressed in acts such as 'seeing' and 'witnessing' that results into 'thinking' and 'willing'. The function of consciousness is so grounded in such potentiality of the "I" that it almost resolves the inherent contradictions between willing and being causally determined. The act of willing by the self is characterized by DK as 'will to live' as opposed to Nietzsche's 'will to power', which can be understood in terms of its capacity to create a "world of meaning and significance" (*Towards a Theory* 102). Such a world is ontologically very different from thing-in-itself. DK describes it as 'world of art'.

In such a world of art, what emerges is the 'concreteness' of the other who is neither a subject nor an object, a non-conceptual centre of consciousness that establish a feeling-relationship. A feeling-relationship is not physical reality, it is rather a space of relations that involves moments of being 'felt' and 'experienced' through the vehicle of 'imagination', which is a state of 'freedom' of the senses from the transcendental and structural illusoriness of the 'real'. Being 'felt' and 'experienced' is also constitutive of the 'world' in which such feeling-relationships can exist, shorn of its external referential functions. Within such a world, the other constitutes the self, which is already linguistically constituted in both semantic and extra-semantic ways is further embedded in a relationship of sublimity with itself as well as with others around. The Other, further constitutes the sublime subjectivity within the world constituting feature of language and thereby establishes an inter-subjective 'creative illusioning', which is also a sense of being 'free' from the bounds of senses. Such creative illusions are an "invitation to the other to jointly create something which was not there before" (*Towards a Theory* 119). The outcome of such a creation is a 'world of meanings' that modifies our consciousness of the world in order to enhance our capacity to encounter it in greater sense of freedom. This is a transvaluational effort of consciousness to attain an enhanced representation of the episteme of the world that stands both as a substitute as well as a surrogate to the existential reality.

Creative illusioning is not a mere return to the feeling-relationship, but it is enactive mode of creativity that surpasses attempt at restricting thought in limits of language. Creative thinking disconnects itself at will from the world and the subject does not lack qualities of interpreting and reconstructing the world, it transfigures the world and the subject. This *transfiguration* is the art that life looks for.<sup>2</sup>

This idea of DK comes very close to an idea of creative freedom as well. Creative freedom arises in the inevitable hermeneutic circle between creator's original intent and its later reproduction in a variety of synthetic acts of knowledge and practice. Such a use of knowledge in practices, as advocated and understood by DK is a creation of 'worlds' in human subjectivity by enhancing one's consciousness which is enhanced by the freedom of the other and not restricted by the other.

### Notes

1. Daya Krishna quoted K.C. Bhattacharya's classic phrase, "in relating oneself to the other without getting related" (*Civilizations* 36).
2. For a detailed argument about transfiguration, see Miri 71.

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## Daya Krishna Tells the Truth about Lying Platonic Methodology of Daya Krishna

Priyedarshi Jetli

### **Abstract:**

In 1961 Daya Krishna raised Socratic questions that cast serious doubt on whether robots can be programmed to lie as Scriven maintained in 1960. Daya Krishna distinguishes the intentional dimension from the performatory one, arguing that it is doubtful that the latter can be duplicated in a robot. For Daya Krishna behaviour is closely tied to verbalized expression and intentionality. A Socratic insight is that we cannot determine what lying is at the performatory or intentional level until we know what 'lying' is. There is no consensus on the definition of 'lying' and the Scriven's definition is not satisfactory. Lying does not involve knowing a proposition but only believing a proposition. Furthermore, beliefs involve degrees, hence vagueness. And if beliefs are fuzzy then lying is fuzzy. Fuzziness will thus have to be built into a robot in order to carry on the lying activity. Further, 'lying' is complementarily coupled with 'telling the truth'. So, an adequate definition of 'lying' can only be achieved when we also have an adequate definition of 'telling the truth' and the definition of the latter is missing in Scriven's article. However, in his main objection to Scriven, Daya Krishna begs the question of free will. To say that robots will never be able to lie because they do not have free will, and humans have free will, is simply to say that robots cannot have free will because they are not human and then of course one has to establish that humans have free will.

**Keywords:** Compleat Robot, Performatory, Intentionality, Free Will, Lying, Telling the Truth.

### Introduction

Michael Scriven in “The Compleat Robot: A Prolegomena to Androidology” (1960) defines the performatory dimension of lying as “to lie is to utter a falsehood when the truth is known” (141), and goes on to argue that a robot can be programmed to lie just as a human does at the performatory level. Daya Krishna in a comment published in the *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* entitled “Lying and the Compleat Robot” (1961), raises poignant Socratic questions that cast serious doubt on whether robots can be programmed to lie.

Daya Krishna first separates the intentional dimension of lying from the performatory one. Then he argues that the intentional dimension is a complex one and it is doubtful that this can be duplicated in a robot. It may seem that Daya Krishna anticipates John Searle’s famous Chinese room objection to strong artificial intelligence in his paper “Minds, Brains and Programs” (1980). Searle’s article is also a response to the question ‘can machines think?’ raised and answered in the affirmative by Alan Turing in “Computing Machinery and Intelligence” (1950).

Searle’s argument basically boils down to intentionality and understanding that are present in humans but missing in computing machines. To my mind this begs the question. Daya Krishna avoids begging the question by simply stating that the intentionality and deliberativeness that are involved in human lying are very complex and such complexity would somehow have to be duplicated in the robot; and Scriven in his article has not paid any attention to this.

Even at the performatory level, Daya Krishna argues that behaviour is closely tied to verbalized expression and hence to intentionality. Daya Krishna’s main Socratic insight is that we cannot determine what lying is either at the performatory or verbal or intentional level until we know what ‘lying’ is and this is not an easy matter. There is no consensus on the definition of ‘lying’ and it is something that needs to be constructed and developed.

Here Daya Krishna, to my mind, makes two profound remarks:

First, the definition provided by Scriven is not appropriate. Lying does not involve knowing a proposition but only believing a proposition. If I believe a proposition such as ‘Daya Krishna was the member of the department of philosophy at the University of Rajasthan’ and say that ‘Daya Krishna was always a member of the department of philosophy at the University of Delhi’, then I am lying, regardless of the truth of the proposition. Furthermore, Daya Krishna claims that beliefs involve degrees, hence vagueness. And if beliefs are fuzzy then so will lying be fuzzy. A robot will then have to have fuzziness built into it to carry on the lying activity. At least in 1961, building in fuzziness into a robot might have seemed impossible, but may be possible today.

Second, 'lying' is complementarily coupled with 'telling the truth'. So that an adequate definition of 'lying' can only be achieved when we also have an adequate definition of 'telling the truth' and the definition of the latter is completely missing in Scriven's article. Since Scriven has a full section in his long paper devoted to lying, we cannot simply sign off by saying that he need not have devoted himself to this matter of defining. To my mind, Daya Krishna, in his Socratic task has also anticipated what is deficient in a lot of philosophy articles in journals today: simply not enough effort is spent on defining central terms, and it is taken for granted that there is a consensus definition that everyone agrees to. This is simply bad faith.

Daya Krishna concludes: "[W]e may rest assured that it (the robot) is not human in the sense in which we consider ourselves to be human, that is, free to tell the lie or truth as it pleases us" (149). I have said above that Daya Krishna avoids begging the question but here I fear that he begs the question of free will like Searle begs the question of intentionality. To say that robots will never be able to lie because they do not have free will, and humans have free will, is simply to say that robots cannot have free will because they are not human and then of course one has to establish that humans have free will. Knowing the spirit of Daya Krishna, he would have welcomed such criticism and gone on to write another short, concise, thoughtful and profound response to my objection.

### **Scriven's Compleat Robot and Lying**

Michael Scriven in "The Compleat Robot: A Prolegomena to Androidology" basically provides an updated version of Alan Turing's famous paper "Computing Machinery and Intelligence". Turing's main question in his paper was 'Can machines think?' More like a Socratic Platonic philosopher rather than a mathematician or computer scientist Turing begins with attempting first to define 'machine'. Scriven follows suit by entitling the first section of his long paper as "The Meaning of "Machine"" (118).

In a Platonic fashion, like Turing had done, Scriven begins with what would be inadequate definitions of 'machine' such as "'machine' is an inanimate artificial device". With such a definition we could not even ask a question like 'are machines conscious?' because we would first identify consciousness with humans who are animate and then simply dismiss the claim that machines have consciousness by claiming that they are inanimate (119).

Scriven arrives then at a tentative working definition. He gives a purposefully loosely constructed and vague definition of 'machine' as: "something that is manufactured from the usual electronic and mechanical components found in a computer workshop, with possible future refinements" (119).



With this working definition of ‘machine’ Scriven goes on to consider a number of attributes commonly associated with ‘thinking’ and in Turing style his main strategy is to end up with the answer to the questions of ‘can machines understand?’, ‘can machines analyse?’, and so on as ‘why not?’. The ‘why not?’ strategy is usually backed up with the claim that any criterion we can come up with for distinguishing human minds from machines at the performatory (behavioural) level will not work in distinguishing human minds from machines.

Scriven follows this strategy with what are taken to be different aspects of human thinking: predicting, choosing, creating, discovering, leaning, understanding, interpreting, analysing (translation, abstracting, indexing), deciding, perceiving, extra sensory perceiving, feeling, lying and being.

However, unlike Turing, Scriven does distinguish the question of whether machines can think at two levels: the personality component and the performatory component (124). Hence, Scriven states that machines without having the personality of having sensations might have sensation behaviour “Now the substance of my disagreement with Turing was that a machine *might* be made to duplicate sensation behaviours without having the sensations” (141).

In section 12, Scriven considers the possibility of computers lying. He begins by stating “to refer to an entity as lying commits one to the personality component as well as the performatory one. I shall use the term to refer to the performatory element for the moment” (140-41). Hence, Scriven clearly states that he will only deal with the behavioural/performatory dimension of lying and not with personality dimension. This will be the key to Daya Krishna’s criticism of Scriven.

Scriven then defines ‘to lie’ as “to utter a falsehood when the truth is known” (141). We may reformulate this definition as Scriven’s Definition of Lying (SDL):

SDL: S is lying to Q if and only if (i) S knows  $p$ , and (ii) S tells not- $p$  to Q. ( $S$  and  $Q$  refer to persons and  $p$  to a proposition).

Now, Scriven describes a sophisticated scenario in which robots build or program other robots. I don’t have the technical savvy to follow this. But from the best I could understand, and I may be terribly mistaken about this, here is the crux of this scenario:

We program the robot with notions of truth and falsehood and with the definition of lying just mentioned above, that is, SDL. Then we add a circuit which makes it impossible for the robot to lie. Now, we ask the robot the question: ‘Do you have feelings?’ On the assumption that robots do not have feelings, if the robot answers the question with a ‘yes’ with the program we have fed, then we have our answer as the robot has lied since robots do

not have feelings. On the other hand, if the robot answers the question as ‘no’, then we program this robot to build another robot on somewhat different principles, and if this new robot answers the question ‘no’ it builds another robot, and so on until we get one descendent robot to answer the question with a ‘yes’.

Now, I risk an expansion of this, which is not stated in Scriven’s article. That is, the scenario in which robots do have feelings. What happens then? Now, if the robot answers the question as ‘no’ then we have what we want as the robot has lied. And if the robot answers it ‘yes’ then we program it to build another robot on slightly different principles and if it still answers yes, it builds another robot and so on, until we get the desired answer of ‘no’ and then we would have a lying robot.

Now, let us move to Daya Krishna’s response to Scriven’s section on the lying robot.

### **Daya Krishna’s Criticism of Scriven**

*Bold conjecture that Scriven has treated the matter of defining ‘lying’ casually:*

In the very first paragraph of his comment “‘Lying’ and the Compleat Robot” Daya Krishna states: “But I think that the question whether a robot can lie requires some further discussion than the extremely casual one given by him in this study” (146). When I first read this sentence I thought that Daya Krishna was being rather bold in taken on someone like Michael Scriven. But after reading Scriven’s section on lying three times I realize that Daya Krishna is right, that Scriven has given a casual and a rather confusing discussion of lying.

The major fault of Scriven as I see it is that at the beginning of the section on lying he clearly states that lying is at two levels: the personality and the performative levels and that he will deal only with the performativity level; and then at the end of the section on lying Scriven states “and there remains only the question of personality” (142). When one makes an important distinction like this one and also states that this is where he differs from Turing, and then to explicitly state it for the phenomenon of lying and then to completely ignore one of these dimensions is indeed to treat the manner of ‘lying’ rather lightly.

Now, Daya Krishna, like Turing and Scriven carries on the Platonic activity of examining the definition of ‘lying’. Like a Plato dialogue Daya Krishna begins by pointing out the deficiencies of the definition of ‘lying’ given by Scriven, that is SDL:

First, lying is not confined to verbal behaviour only. One could lie by gestures, with the eyes, and so on; whereas SDL is stated in terms of verbal behaviour and propositions. Second, a true sentence may be uttered in such a way combined with a gesture that turns it into a lie. This is simply contrary to SDL. Because of these two deficiencies Daya Krishna concludes “‘Lying’,

then, is a rather complex affair and needs exploration both on the intentional and the performatory side before the Compleat Robot may do what he is expected to do” (146). Here Daya Krishna is hinting that unless both the personality and the performatory levels are properly understood and described in the robot in the case of lying we will have an incomplete and precarious account of lying and will not be able to establish as Scriven claims to have established that robots can lie.

The second objection also leads to a fundamental insight of Daya Krishna: “One need not exactly *know* the case, in order that the lie may be a lie. One’s belief for the purpose is sufficient” (142). Now, we see the sequence here is quite like the sequence of a Plato dialogue. First deficiencies of the standard definition of lying (SDL) are pointed out, perhaps giving a chance to the proponents of SDL to revise this definition. In a short comment Daya Krishna does not have the time to suggest how the definition could be revised to take care of these deficiencies, which Plato might have done when he has ample time within the body of a particular dialogue like the *Republic*. So, Daya Krishna jumps to the next step of rejecting the standard definition and replacing it with another working definition. This new definition can be stated as the Belief Definition of Lying (BDL):

BDL: S is lying to Q iff (i) S believes *p*, and (ii) S conveys *not-p* to Q.

One may start seeing the writing on the wall here and say that beliefs are intentional propositional attitudes of humans, computers and robots do not have beliefs so computers and robots cannot lie. However, this would be rather shoddy reasoning and Daya Krishna is careful not to jump to this conclusion and proceeds with caution for very good reasons. SDL involves knowing and in the traditional definition of knowledge, belief is a necessary condition so if robots cannot believe then they cannot also know, unless we have a separate definition of ‘knowledge’ for robots. So, Daya Krishna moves to BDL initially for a different and good reason as we will see now.

Let us say that I believe that P. T. Raju taught at Oberlin College in Ohio in the later part of his career. Since I have driven a lot in Ohio, I go around telling people that P. T. Raju taught at Wooster College in the later part of his career. Now, it turns out that even though I believed that P. T. Raju taught at Oberlin College in the later part of his career he actually taught, unknown to me, at Wooster College and never at Oberlin. So, what I have been going around and telling people is the truth. Hence, according to SDL it is not a lie. But surely my intention was to lie to people. Hence, SDL fails as the definition of ‘lying’. BDL on the other hand works here, since I actually believed a false proposition that P. T. Raju did not teach at Wooster College in the later period of his career and go around telling people, contrary to my belief that he taught at Wooster College.

Now, Daya Krishna's insight is as follows: When the listeners properly investigate the facts they will discover that P. T. Raju in fact taught at Wooster College and not at Oberlin College, they will at that point not suspect that I had lied but on the contrary would think that I have told the truth. So it will be difficult for anyone to suspect that I am lying, rather they will think that I am telling the truth.

Daya Krishna wants to say that perhaps one necessary condition of 'lying' is that the liar succeeds in lying. This seems to happen when we adopt BDL. But when we adopt SDL then my example would change to my knowing that P. T. Raju taught at Wooster and then lying and telling people that he had taught at Oberlin. Now, when they check the facts they will come to suspect that I was lying. So I would not have succeeded as a liar.

After bringing out this subtlety, Daya Krishna now brings on the intentional feature of beliefs: "And 'believing' is a very 'intentional' affair... one does not generally speak of the beliefs of animals, not to speak of the beliefs of robots" (146). There are perhaps two future developments anticipated by Daya Krishna here. First, 1961 is two years before Gettier's famous paper in 1963. Daya Krishna may be feeling uncomfortable with the conventional definition of 'knowledge' as justified true belief, and perhaps anticipates that some in the future may define 'knowledge' without having belief as a necessary condition. In recent times philosophers like Hyman and others deny that knowledge is a species of belief and consider a definition of knowledge in which belief is not a necessary condition. Second, and perhaps more remarkable, Daya Krishna seems to anticipate Searle's 1980 claim that computers cannot think like humans because humans have intentionality and computers do not. However, whereas Searle begs the question of intentionality, Daya Krishna is more careful. He says that we don't generally speak of non-human animals and robots as having beliefs (presumably because they don't have intentions). But of course we could be wrong and robots may actually have intentions.

Daya Krishna's point is that the task of Scriven and others like him is more difficult than they might take it to be. Turing and Scriven might say 'Why can't computers lie?' as their lying behaviour cannot be distinguished from human lying behaviour. Daya Krishna would respond, that this may well be true, but lying involves beliefs and beliefs involve intentionality, so Turing and Scriven will have to establish that robots have intentionality and this may not be an easy task for them to accomplish. In short, whereas for Searle, it is a rather dogmatic assertion that humans have intentionality and robots don't; for Daya Krishna it is an open question but a great challenge for Turing and Scriven. One reason for Daya Krishna's caution is that he knows well that if he is to be Platonic, he will have to define 'intentionality' and this in itself will not be an easy task.

However, as soon as I give, practicing the principle of charity, the benefit of doubt to Daya Krishna he makes a statement at the end of the same paragraph that seems to abandon this caution as he says that the mere verbal expression of a belief by a human is sufficient for us to ascribe that belief to her/him; but in the case of a robot “no one will believe in this belief if a machine was made to utter such a verbalised expression” (147). I think this begs the question, because if we say that we cannot distinguish whether it is a robot or a human who is uttering a lie, then why would we believe in one case and not in the other.

However, just before this ending of the paragraph, Daya Krishna has another important insight when he says “the ascription of belief to some object can make sense only if it can be said, in some sense, to disbelieve also” (147). This means that believing and disbelieving are correlatives and perhaps must be defined together. So that if we wish to say that non-human animals and robots can have beliefs then we also have to demonstrate that they can disbelieve as well, and the latter may be more difficult to do from their behaviour than the former. That is, we may be able to claim that a robot believes some proposition from its performatory behaviour but we may not be able to claim that a robot disbelieves some proposition from its performatory behaviour. This makes the task, even at the performatory level a bit more difficult for Turing and Scriven.

Daya Krishna now claims that lying also involves a purpose and in order for one to be lying one has to be successful in making the other person believe that one is telling the truth about what one believes. Even at the performatory level we need to determine whether one has been successful in the activity of lying. Scriven has not described how the robot is to be programmed so that it succeeds in the activity of lying. That is because Scriven has not considered this dimension of lying along with other characteristics of lying at all (Krishna 147). Daya Krishna’s central critique here is that Scriven has not been Platonic at all. He has stated one definition of ‘lying’ at the beginning of the section on ‘lying’ and stuck to it rather uncritically without considering alternatives to this definition or revisions to this definition or considering aspects of lying that might be left out of any definition of ‘lying’.

We may build a robot which is programmed mechanically to say the opposite of what it knows. However, since this would be done mechanically it would not be accompanied by a lying behaviour as in the case of humans. Perhaps we can further program the robot to display lying behaviour as well. Daya Krishna emphasizes again that lying behaviour is so multifarious in humans ranging from gestures to eye movements to body language to new and creative behaviour that it would be difficult to program a robot with all of these (148).

We may program the computer to lie at random. But then it may be in a particular instance of lying the robot is lying contrary to its own interests, if

it can have interests. Then, it would not be lying as it is not in the case of humans. Perhaps we can program the robot to exclude self-defeating lies but then the rest of the lies if the end or goal of lying is not built in would be a joke (148).

The crux of the matter, Daya Krishna contends is that without understanding what 'lying' is even at the behavioural or performatory level, how can we determine that the robot can lie? In his explanation of how computers can lie which we saw above, Scriven says that we add a circuit so that the computer only tells the truth. But if the robot does this then it is after all a robot and not a human because a human has to be able to tell a lie at any time (148).

Now comes Daya Krishna's important insight, that is, lying and truth telling are correlatives. It would make no sense to say that someone can lie if someone cannot tell the truth and it would make no sense to say that someone is telling the truth if someone cannot lie. Furthermore, just as it is not clear what the definition of 'lying' is or what would count as the appropriate behaviour for lying, similarly it is not clear what the definition of 'telling the truth' is or what would count as the appropriate behaviour for telling the truth. Further even the definition for 'truth' is not an easy matter to find consensus on (149).

I take this to be the apex of the Platonic method in this comment of Daya Krishna. That is unless we exhaust as completely as possible defining a term like 'lying' and its correlative 'telling the truth' and thereby recursively also defining 'truth' since it is embedded in the proposed definition of 'lying' we really cannot reach any conclusions about whether or not a robot can lie. Michael Scriven in his section on 'lying' has not even begun the task of revision of the definition of 'lying', leave alone completing the activity of defining 'lying', so how can he so quickly reach the conclusion that computers can lie? Hence, we can conclude that Scriven is simply in bad faith of Platonic methodology. Hence, Daya Krishna states: "In any case, there seems little doubt that a lot of analysis is needed even on the performatory level to say that a robot is 'lying' or 'telling the truth'" (149).

We could program the robot to be somewhere between mechanical and random but how is this to be done. If we go Scriven's way and program the computer to always tell the truth then the computer is surely not human because it is always predictable whereas humans are not always predictable which is contrary to the purpose of making him close to human. I think here Daya Krishna is mistaken. The question is not whether the robot is human but whether the robot can lie. This is a lapse on Daya Krishna's part in an otherwise very compactly and perspicuously written comment.

Now, I come to Daya Krishna's last sentence of the comment:

If, on the other hand, the robot's unpredictability is given up in the matter of 'truth-telling' then whatever the robot's answer to

Scriven's question, we may rest assured that it is not human in the sense in which we consider ourselves to be human, that is, free to tell the lie or truth as it pleases us. (149)

It seems almost clear that Daya Krishna is begging the question of free will here. He seems to assume that humans have free will and robots don't. Then he goes on to incorporate free will into the definition of 'lying'. Hence, computers by definition cannot lie. Furthermore, Daya Krishna here is assuming that humans have free will without defining 'free will' or providing an argument for free will in humans. So it seems that Daya Krishna is in bad faith of the Platonic methodology that he is so carefully adhered to in this comment. However, if we pay close attention to the language of this last sentence we can defend Daya Krishna against the charge I have just levied. What Daya Krishna actually says is: "[I]t is not human, in the sense in which we consider ourselves to be human..." (149). So, that there is no assumption of free will in humans here but only the claim that humans consider themselves to have free will. It may be the case that not every human considers herself/himself to have free will, but that they generally do so, is perhaps uncontroversial or could be established empirically. So, Daya Krishna has not been in bad faith here. This is further indicated by the last footnote of the comment:

It is interesting to note the similarity of the robot-maker's dilemma to that of God with respect to man. If man is given freedom, then he may develop all sorts of undesirable qualities and if he is not given freedom, there is no virtue in his love or prayer of truth-telling or anything else he does. (149)

The footnote clearly indicates that Daya Krishna is not dogmatically asserting that humans have free will. Perhaps he is inclined to believe that the arguments in favour of free will are more convincing than arguments against it.

From what I have learned it seems that most who have read a lot of Daya Krishna's works seem to agree that there is a lot of constructive philosophizing in Daya Krishna's works. Hence, I wish to end with the constructive element of this comment, since constructive part follows in the sequence after the destructive, deconstructive, polemic parts in Platonic methodology especially in a dialogue like *Republic*. Here Scriven has failed in Platonic methodology as he simply offers a working definition of 'lying' at the beginning of the section on lying, which I have labelled as SDL. Daya Krishna, on the other hand, first revises SDL to BDL in the first third of his comment, and then in the next two-thirds of his comment, Daya Krishna continues to revise this definition without formally stating the revised definition that he leaves us with as a working definition at the end.

Let me now make an attempt to formally state this revised and recursive definition and call it the Daya Krishna Definition of Lying (DKDL):

DKDL: S is lying to Q iff

- (i) S believes  $p$ ,
- (ii) S intends to convey  $\textit{not-}p$  to Q,
- (iii) S has some purpose in conveying  $\textit{not-}p$  to Q,
- (iv) S is successful in conveying  $\textit{not-}p$  to Q,
- (v) .....

(iv) S is successful in conveying  $\textit{not-}p$  to Q iff

- (a) S conveys  $\textit{not-}p$  through utterance, or through one of many types of gestures conventionally or otherwise taken by Q to be behaviour associated with conveying
- (b) Q comes to believe that S is telling the truth about S's own belief in the matter.
- (c) Q does not suspect that S is lying
- (d) Q also believes that it is possible that S could be lying
- (e) .....



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## Tradition and Science Perspectives of Daya Krishna and Karl Popper

Samikshya Gohain

### **Abstract:**

It was thought that knowledge of tradition and science bears the stamp of indubitability. Daya Krishna's attempt to see the authoritative, so granted as indubitable, nature of Indian philosophy with a critical eye by providing counter-evidence can be very well compared to Karl Popper's anti-conventionalist, anti-authoritarian approach to science with a critical rationalist perspective aided by the method of falsification. To have a critical attitude means we are being cumulative and moving towards an open-ended search thereby incorporating what has so far been unseen and unproved and unincorporated. This attitude can help us go beyond 'intellectual socialization' and an 'intellectual historicism' which we have been going through in the absence of critical thinking. Whether it be philosophy (connected to any tradition) or be it any science, it always lives and prospers through curiosity, the catalyst of knowledge, in the dearth of which all pathways to knowledge will be 'closed'. A fearless attitude to go beyond the closed compass of accepted beliefs and knowledge and capability to devise a new thought, framing hypothesis for new problem-situation and accepting them as tentatively true will help us to exercise creativity in Tradition and Science free from a deterministic corpus.

**Keywords:** Daya Krishna, Karl Popper, Indian Philosophy, Science, Falsifiability, Curiosity.

Once upon a time it was well accepted that science is beyond doubt. Our myths, narratives, traditions, philosophy and knowledge concerning them were also never challenged. Can we ever accept anything without raising a critical eye?

The traditionally accepted truths which bear the stamp of indubitability has been questioned in the philosophical arena and this questioning is compared by Daya Krishna to “emperor’s nudity discovered by a child’s disingenuity” (*Counter Perspective* 3). Here I feel that the child’s position is occupied by Daya Krishna himself who lays down an open ended search about these so-called traditionally accepted truths of Indian Philosophy.

In his book *Indian Philosophy: A Counter Perspective* Daya Krishna takes up the task to challenge the three so-called self-evident claims of Indian philosophy by terming them as ‘myths’. The claim to spirituality, the claim to un-questionable infallible authority, and the concept of schools are the three myths that Daya Krishna unfolds. The traditional way of looking at Indian philosophy is ‘mummified’; and a new and fresh look is possible only if we go beyond the myths. “It is time that this false picture is removed, and the living concerns of ancient thought are brought to life once more. The destruction of these three myths will be a substantial step in this direction” (*Counter Perspective* 15).

Daya Krishna makes an attempt to conceptually articulate the Indian Tradition in intellectual terms. He thinks this can be done by asking new questions or by attempting to free the texts and the Tradition in order to give them a secular and objective stand. Daya Krishna thinks this will help us dive deep into what is implicit and embedded in the text and give us a clear understanding of the conceptual nature of the tradition (Introduction xxi).

Daya Krishna’s attitude reminds us of Popper who questions the authoritarian approach of science, and challenged the infallibility of science. That the laws of science are absolute is a misunderstanding and Popper’s challenge towards this notion has been supported by his critical thought.

Science does not rest upon solid bedrock. The bold structure of its theories rises, as it were, above a swamp. It is like a building erected on piles. The piles are driven down from above into the swamp but not down to any natural or ‘given’ base, and if we stop driving the piles deeper, it is not because we have reached firm ground. We simply stop when we are satisfied that the piles are firm enough to carry the structure, at least for the time being. (Popper, *Logic of Scientific* 94)

A similar position like Popper’s account on science is found in the chapter “Three Myths about Indian Philosophy” in his book *Indian Philosophy: A Counter Perspective* where Daya Krishna opposes the concept of ‘closed school’. He says that the concept of school is closely connected to the concept of authority in Indian Philosophy. If the authority of the Vedas or the Upaniṣads or the *Sūtras* is final, then what is presumed to be propounded in them as philosophy is final also. Thus, there arises a closed school of thought, final and finished, once and for all. But history is

always the story of change, development, differentiation and innovation. How can there be any real history if some primordial authority is posited at the beginning of thought? If we deny the authoritative positions then we have to deny the concept of schools as fixed. Here it would be worth giving a glance to how Popper lays down the conventions of science, the first convention being – “The game of science is, in principle without end. He who decides one day that scientific statements do not call for any further tests, and they can be regarded as finally verified, retires from the game” (Popper, *Logic of Scientific* 32).

### Counter-evidence of Daya Krishna/Falsifiability of Popper

The importance of counter evidence has been pointed out by Daya Krishna. He maintains that the notion of *Śruti* is ‘spurious’ in the article “*Śyena Yāga*: The Achilles Heel of *Śruti* in Indian Tradition” in his book *New Perspectives in Indian Philosophy*. He tries to expose *Śruti* as a myth by pointing out to a contradiction in context of *Śyena Yāga*.

*Śyena Yāga* is a *yajña* supposed to be performed by one who desires to kill his enemy. Daya Krishna states that the earliest reference to the *yajña* is found in *Ṣaḍvīmśa Brāhmaṇa* of the *Sāmaveda*. There is also reference in the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* of *Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda* and later mentioned in *Mīmāṃsā Sūtras*. It is to be noticed that there are slight differences of meaning of the term *Śyena* in the references mentioned above. “*Śyena* refers to the bird or to the sacrifice described therein” (Krishna, *New Perspectives* 105).

Now, if we go to his readings we find his discussion about the acceptability of the *Śyena* Tradition. Daya Krishna points out that in the history of the tradition of *Śyena* two types of arguments regarding its acceptability has cropped up: one proposing the legitimacy and the other rejecting on the basis of its conflicting position to a Vedic injunction. This difference of opinion, Daya Krishna says, arose because of the distinction between (i) ‘ends’ and ‘means’, and (ii) ‘intrinsic’ and ‘instrumental’ use of the performance of this Vedic *Śyena yāga*. Here Daya Krishna wonders how can *Śruti* remain a *Śruti* if divergent opinions about its acceptability arise. This will be a contradiction with the very idea of ‘*Śruti*’. This *Śyena* has been referred to as the ‘Achilles Heel’ of *Śruti*, because such distinction about the traditions can undermine the unquestionable aspect of *Śruti* (*New Perspectives* 105-114).

Daya Krishna has challenged the position of *Śruti* as being authoritative. He says that *Śruti* is used as ‘aura authority’ but it is a myth. Daya Krishna has tried to reveal the myth that ‘*Śruti* is authoritarian’. By this act he tries to loosen the authoritarian hold of *Śruti* on the Indian mindset.

Here it may be brought to notice the challenge raised by Popper in case of the unquestionable nature of science by his advocacy of *falsifiability*. A universal statement is falsified by a single genuine counter-instance. A Basic statement is a statement which he defines as one which can serve as an empirical falsification and which takes the singular existential form: There is an X at Y. Basic statements formally contradict universal statements and accordingly play the role of potential falsifiers.

Let us try to express the example of Daya Krishna regarding *Śyena yāga* with the help of Popper's method of Falsification:

Let us suppose: *Śruti* is something which cannot be tampered.  
The counter instance: *Śyena yāga* is in conflict with the Vedic injunction regarding the avoidance of violence or *himsā*.

We can make it in the form of a syllogism:

If *Śruti* is authoritative then it cannot be in a conflicting position.  
*Śruti* is not in a non-conflicting position (e.g. *Śyena yāga*).  
Therefore, *Śruti* is not authoritative.

What Daya Krishna tries to challenge about *Śruti* can be also showed with Popper's Falsification with the help of Modus Tollens.

In another article, "A Plea for a New History of Philosophy in India", in the same book *New Perspective*, Daya Krishna feels that there is an absence of a cumulative, collaborative effort on the part of the researchers as they are unable to cover the shifting focus and emphasis of the discussions in Indian thought. This perspective is 'Insulated' in the sense that it is 'untouched' or 'protected from influences'. This way Indian Philosophy is seen as segregated from the other civilizations. The identification of the so-called 'national', 'civilizational' is regarded by him as parochial ego-centricism (*New Perspectives* 7-12). This, according to him, is a distorted way of looking at the past because of a fixed way of presentation of history. Here comes the need for a critical approach to relook at the 'so-called Indian Philosophy'.

### Curiosity and Critical Thinking

Daya Krishna talks about absence of awareness as one of the reasons for this distorted perspective of Indian Philosophy (*New Perspectives* 9). There is a close connection between 'awareness' and 'curiosity'. To have awareness about something implies a sense of curiosity in the mind about that particular thing. It may be here said that curiosity is an essential stepping stone towards building awareness, appreciation and understanding of other cultures. Through curiosity people can gain new perspectives, unparalleled learning and growth, and a chance for interesting conversation and reflection at every interaction. Daya Krishna feels that Indian Philosophy was far from making interconnections with other civilizations as well as within the civilization, and no attempt was made to link and integrate the thought in other civilizations with the realms of philosophical thought. This shows that there is a lack of curiosity and critical attitude among the thinkers as a result of which Indian Philosophy has turned 'insulated'.

Curiosity here can be taken as synonymous with the questioning attitude – a psychological attitude for some impersonal motive. But this curiosity is not equivalent to 'doubt'. Doubt is epistemological and cannot be taken as a curiosity. It is rather like a perception. "Curiosity is seen to be the catalyst that creates knowledge. Because we

are dissatisfied with the answers we get, we come up with new ways of thinking. We discover science” (Sarukkai 186). Such is the relation between curiosity and critical thinking. Here, it will be pertinent to remark that not only science, our tradition our philosophy also has to be seen with curiosity.

Fontes da Costa argues that ‘being curious’ was an important trait of a scientist and the ‘pursuit of curiosities’ as being a valuable act (See Fontes da Costa).

### **Critical Engagement as a Special Quality of Humans**

In his book *Objective Knowledge* Popper discusses the critical engagement of human beings by his theory related to three worlds:

[W]e may distinguish the following three worlds or universes, first, the world of physical objects or physical states; secondly, the world of states of consciousness or of mental states, or perhaps of behavioural dispositions to act; and thirdly, the world of objective contents of thought. (106)

Thus if we see Popper’s evolutionary ontology we find that it is characterized by three worlds: World 1, World 2 and World 3. Popper calls *World 1* the world of physical entities, those we all call real, that is, the objects, the living beings, the plants, the water, the sun and the moon. The physical processes are also in this world: the forces, the force fields, light, sound waves, electricity, atoms etc. It is the world of facts. *World 2* is the world of our subjective experiences, our sensations, our conscious perceptions, that is, of our mental states. We must emphasize that Popper does not state, as Descartes did, that this world is composed by immaterial entities. For Popper, *World 3* is the world of cultural entities, those things produced by man, such as tools, theories, language (language is a tool), the alphabet, the works of art, myths, religion etc.

The world 3 is the product of the evolution of human language. Out of the four stages of language that Popper talks of (expressive, signalling, descriptive, argumentative), Popper emphasizes on the descriptive and argumentative functions. Because of these, there exist theories, mistakes, errors, problems and problem situations, descriptive statements and rational arguments. Argumentative function can be said as a technique of adaptation by which an organism tries to reconcile with the environment. This argumentative function is characterized by rational criticism.

The descriptive and especially the argumentative functions of language evidence how humans evolved to transcend or distance themselves from their merely biological origins. Popper thinks this distancing can best be achieved by critically engaging the objective content of theories in a fallibilist way.... (Sceski 130)

Daya Krishna urges to revisit the conceptual and theoretical structures related to man, nature and society and this task is to be performed by:

[S]elf-conscious human beings who do not merely undergo the process of living, but also think about it, and pass on the results of such thinking to

successive generations either orally or in written form or both, who, in turn, add, modify, or change it in the light of their own experience of those perennial dimensions which permanently define the situation. The dialogue between these diverse conceptual articulations and theorisations, and the problem of commensurability or comparability between them, may await not only their articulation in the contemporary cognitive context, but also their modification and development in the light of the experience these cultures have undergone during the last few centuries of their existence. (*New Perspectives* 209)

### **How to get rid of ‘Intellectual Socialization’ and ‘Intellectual Historicism’?**

Daya Krishna in the chapter “The *Varnāśrama* Syndrome of Indian Sociology” in *New Perspectives in Indian Philosophy* asks people to distinguish between ideal and the actual, between ideals and ideologies, reasons and rationalists and the given categorical structures in which people articulate reality and the alternative ways in which it can be categorised. The contemporary world has been explained by the western social scientists in terms of ‘tradition-modernity syndrome’ as Daya Krishna says. He points out that the non-western has also accepted this uncritically.

Since social reality in India is plural and diverse in character, therefore its constant change and fluidity cannot be interpreted in one unique way. The social reality articulated in terms of ‘caste’ has left a kind of deep, unconscious effect on Indian students which Daya Krishna says is a kind of ‘Intellectual Socialization’. This has led them to accept the social reality as it is and never thought it as an issue of critical sociological investigation, which has also kept them away from any further research of Western societies.

While talking about socio-anthropological research in India the so-called scientific study of society has not been done with responsibility as the counter evidence related to a particular investigation is ‘underplayed’ or ‘ignored’ in the interest of some pre-conceived notion. Daya Krishna remarks “any honest intellectual enterprise has not only to account for, but also actively search for, the counter-evidence and the counter-argument” (*New Perspectives* 203).

From the standpoint of Popper if we distinguish science from pseudo-science, we have to admit that genuine scientific statements are testable and open to empirical refutation. While talking about a scientific system Popper in his *Logic of Scientific Discovery* says, “it must be possible for an empirical scientific system to be refuted by experience” (18). Intersubjective testing is necessary for a theory to be scientific otherwise it will share the same status as an occult practice. Scientific statements are falsifiable only when it is open to repeatable test. Counter-evidence and counter-argument also plays an important role in Popper’s critical methodology. The anti-foundationalist methodology is not only found in Popper’s approach to science but also is evident in his political theory. In his work *The Open Society and its Enemies*, Popper tries to combat the intellectual roots of the ideology that has led to national

socialism. Forms of collectivism, totalitarianism are being criticized. This he feels is because of a mistaken methodology which he calls historicism (see Birner).

Popper criticizes historicism and totalitarianism and proposes democracy as an alternative in *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. This open society is open to several values, several visions of the philosophical world and several religions. Popper says that the two types of government viz., totalitarianism and democracy are different from each other at the level of methodology. Critical inquiry plays a very important role in shaping the political scenario. "Totalitarian leaders invoke historicism and exploit meagre intellectual resources to secure authority as prophets of the future and as agents of social policy. To admit to error is to invite criticism and so undermine authority" (*Open Society* 189).

Moreover in another passage Popper remarks about the danger of historicism which paralyzes critical thought and leads to a closed society. "The future-directed nature of historicism gives it the means to forestall criticism by explaining away incongruities and possible refutations of the societal framework because all errors will be reconciled in the future" (*Open Society* 9). Sceski, in this context, observes,

Popper believes that this historicism uses utopian engineering to lead the society to its desired end by relying on the historical laws of destiny. This ultimately results in a closed society. The incorporation of fallibility and critical thinking in a democratic state creates an open society. (138)

Daya Krishna also through his works points out to, which I would like to call, 'intellectual historicism' regarding the orthodox traditions, resulting in a fictitious history of Indian Philosophy. A critical outlook may help arrive at a more authentic, objective and balanced picture of Indian Philosophy.

One important problem Popper identifies is the role of traditions in social life. Is it possible to provide a rational explanation for various traditions and social institutions? In order to look at this issue Popper proposes to look at scientific traditions as a kind of model case. Popper questions, where did the rational tradition start? It is true that the Greek philosophers tried to understand nature but can their attempt to explain nature be assigned as a rational tradition? To this Popper answers that what is important with the Greeks is their willingness to question old explanations and try to improve them. They did not just accept old tradition but were willing to challenge it, invent new alternatives, and debate more than one explanation. This shows how critical thinking plays a role in building a rational tradition (Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations* 162-182).

### **Can We Take a Plunge into Cognitive Journeys Across Conceptual Frontiers?**

Daya Krishna talks about 'cognitive journeys across conceptual frontiers'. This journey is across cultures and civilizations; and he states that the importance of this cognitive journey is to help us in 1) realizing the limited parochiality of the so-



called universal and self-evident, and 2) realizing the openness to the possibility of alternatives which one had not even thought of before (*New Perspectives* 267).

The explanation that we give about the world is called by Popper as 'Myth', which is a first order tradition Popper thinks. And the critical testing of these myths is a second order tradition. So the test of myths becomes necessary to find out the most adequate explanation of the world.

Popper remarks: From this point of view the growth of the theories of science should not be considered as the result of the collection, or accumulation, of observations; on the contrary, the observations and accumulation should be considered as a result of the growth of scientific theories. If in this way we look out for new observations with the intention of probing into the truth of our myths, we need not be astonished if we find that myths handled in this rough manner change their character, and that in time they become what one might call more realistic or that they agree better with observable facts. In other words, under the pressure of criticism the myths are forced to adapt themselves to the task of giving us an adequate and a more detailed picture of the world in which we live (Popper, *Conjecture and Refutation* 127).

The traditionalist and the Rationalist are one sided, as each neglects the other. We need a tradition as it gives us a framework within which to work out on our problems, however, if we stick rigidly to that framework we cannot make progress. So we need our traditions, and we need to criticize them too.

### Conclusion

In Daya Krishna's thought we can find a way to arrive at a solution of this problem by not accepting 'Truth' in the singular and not conceiving of knowledge as a journey towards a fixed destination. This will help in overcoming the revelatory attitude and authoritarianism prevalent. The center of intellectual life lies in the development of critical faculty, whereby weakness and faults can be identified and accordingly modified or curtailed (*New Perspectives*, Appendix 262).

The new perspective of Indian Philosophy that Daya Krishna suggests is only possible through a critical reflection quite akin to Popper's method of science. Richard Feynman associates science to 'critical thinking'. In his speech on 'What is science?' Feynman relates science to observation and the capacity to think critically about these observations.

While talking about a "Field Theory of Indian Philosophy" in his book *New Perspectives in Indian Philosophy*, Daya Krishna talks about getting out of the 'prison-house' of systems and to focus attention on the problems, issues and questions that troubled philosophers in India. Instead of simply talking about it we need to get engaged ourselves and find the truth. This engagement is all about critical thinking which involves us in an act of philosophizing or 'doing philosophy'. In science too we are involved in a way with 'doing'. "Curiosity is seen as a virtue and scientists are supposed to be curious as children are, that is, being curious without worrying about the consequences of being curious" (Sarukkai 20). With the ideas supplied by curiosity

scientists frame thought experiments which is a way of 'doing' science. The critical thought or involvement in thought makes a science or philosophy a living enterprise. The 'doing' aspect in philosophy and science keeps both the subjects alive.

This makes us arrive at the point that Virtue Epistemology has become very important for us. Virtue Epistemology brings the 'knowing subject' and 'sociality of the subject' as an important element of the knowing process. Intellectual virtues such as impartiality, intellectual sobriety, courage, curiosity, being truthful, sensitivity to detail, intellectual humility, fairness in evaluating the arguments of others, intellectual perseverance etc. are essential in the process of knowing (Sarrukai 185).

We find philosophers like William James and Bertrand Russell relating philosophy to some kind of stubborn attitude. James described philosophy as 'a peculiarly stubborn effort to think clearly'. We should be 'unusually obstinate' in not accepting any conventional answers, not taking for granted any assumption and not accepting any theory once and for all (Gottlieb ix).

Philosophy arises from an unusually obstinate attempt to arrive at real knowledge. What passes for knowledge in ordinary life suffers from three defects: it is cocksure, vague and self-contradictory. This first step towards philosophy consists in becoming aware of these defects, not in order to rest content with a lazy skepticism, but in order to substitute an amended kind of knowledge which shall be tentative, precise and self-consistent. (Russell 1)

Daya Krishna talks about "Strategies for Conceptual Creativity" in the Appendix to *New Perspectives in Indian Philosophy* where he appeals to withdraw ourselves from the thoughts which are finished, frozen, congealed between the covers of a book and to incorporate fluidity in our thought so that we can see our knowledge as tentative, hesitant, provisional-subject to revision and counter revision. He draws our attention to 'misguided intellectual effort of humanity' where he refers to able minds wasting their time in engaging themselves in so-called revelatory texts and disputing over what someone else has said.

The past and the present teaching and learning process in educational institutions are not far from flaw. The '*guru-śiṣya* symbiosis' or the 'master-disciple syndrome' is very much responsible for this situation. Knowledge has turned out simply to be "a repetition of what is habitually accepted as true by practitioners in a certain domain" (Krishna, *New Perspectives* 257).

A fearless attitude to go beyond the closed compass of accepted belief and knowledge and capability to devise a new thought, framing hypothesis for new problem situation and accepting them as tentatively true may help us exercise creativity in Tradition and Science free from a deterministic corpus.

Where the clear stream of reason  
Has not lost its way  
Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit

Where the mind is led forward by thee  
Into ever-widening thought and action  
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father,  
Let my country awake. (Tagore 52)

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## Daya Krishna on Value Awareness

R. C. Sinha

**Abstract:**

The present paper attempts to deal with instrumental and intrinsic values. It also gives philosophical treatment to the concept of spiritual value. I have chosen this topic because the aesthetic dimension of Daya Krishna's philosophy has been ignored by philosophers. Daya Krishna is quite an original thinker of contemporary India. I have tried to read Daya Krishna in a new philosophical dimension. My treatment to the problem of value awareness of Daya Krishna is primarily based on his much acclaimed thesis submitted for Ph.D. in Delhi University and later published under the title *The Nature of Philosophy*.

**Keywords:** Daya Krishna, Intrinsic, Instrumental and Spiritual Values, Truth, Beauty and Goodness.

During my research on Concepts of Reason and Intuition, I read the great work by Benedetto Croce on 'Aesthetic'. Croce arrived at philosophy through aesthetics. This is a very rare situation for great philosophers who normally deal with the problem of epistemology or metaphysics through aesthetics. Daya Krishna arrives at aesthetics as a complement to or a reflection of those problems which are imposed on them from other realms of experience. Croce is upholder of the cognitive nature of art. Art is a form of intuitive knowledge. This is the corner stone of Croce's aesthetics. Knowledge takes two forms: intuitive and conceptual knowledge. Croce identified intuition and art. In order to equate art with intuitive knowledge, Croce has to distinguish between intuitive knowledge and conceptual knowledge. Croce was neither primarily a student of philosophy, nor ever a professional teacher of it. He distinguished himself as a literary man, a critic of art. It is his insight in art which developed into philosophy. But Daya Krishna is primarily a philosopher and a professional teacher. He distinguished himself as philosopher.

Spiritual activity is broadly divisible into two kinds, theoretical and practical. Knowing and willing are lowering and closely related because there cannot be any willing without knowing. Knowing involves two kinds of activities, aesthetic and logical. Willing also involves two kinds of activities, aesthetic intuition and logical judgement. Judgement is thus a higher grade of mental activity compared with aesthetic intuition. Intuition can be understood in two ways, one is sensuous, another is spiritual. Spiritual intuitive experience is integral.

The aesthetic value is relegated to the margins in the present technological society. But some of the important names in contemporary Indian thought preoccupied with literary aesthetics are Abhinavagupta, Rabindranath Tagore, Aurobindo, Mohammad Iqbal, and Daya Krishna. Aesthetics is the search after the secret of life. Plato believed in beauty as a form and beautiful objects as harmony and unity among their parts. In the metaphysics, Aristotle found that the universal elements of beauty were order and symmetry. Abhinava Gupta suggests that aesthetics experience is something beyond worldly experience and has used the word '*Alaukika*' to describe it. Rabindranath Tagore believed that beauty does not emanate from the outside; rather it helps us behold our inner light.

*The Nature of Philosophy* by Daya Krishna is an extraordinary book. He is a thinker of the second half of the twentieth century. He draws his intellectual sustenance from a great variety of sources of the philosophical traditions of both the East and the West. He also displays a deep insight and understanding of philosophical traditions both of the East and the West. I have dealt here with value awareness. Values are worth striving for. Value is indeed the ground of both the 'Ought-to-Be' and the 'Ought-to-Do'. They do not exhaust the nature of values. Truth, Beauty and Goodness have been the traditional intrinsic

values. Most of the values have generally been regarded as 'instrumental'. Daya Krishna has explained the distinction between instrumental and intrinsic values. Aesthetic value is primarily intrinsic. This distinction seems to correlate it with the hierarchical structure of values. The higher cannot be realized without the lower. Thus making the realization of the lower values is a necessary precondition for the actualization of the higher. The lower values are 'instrumental', therefore, in the sense that without their being realized, the higher cannot be realized. Every value is both intrinsic and instrumental. 'Intrinsic' in the sense that it is a value; 'instrumental' in the sense that there are values higher than it which cannot be realized without its realization. It is true that without the biological values, social, intellectual, aesthetic and moral values cannot be realized. The body is the fulcrum of all sorts of value awareness. A dead man is not concerned to worldly values. He is not concerned to other worldly values.

There is difference between intrinsic value and instrumental value. Daya Krishna observes:

The correlation of the distinction between 'instrumental' and 'intrinsic' with the hierarchical character of values in the sense that the realisation of higher values presupposes the realisation of the lower ones, suggests that 'Truth', 'Beauty', and 'Goodness' in their character of ultimate intrinsicity are regarded as the highest in the hierarchy. (154)

They seem to be only 'intrinsic' and not 'instrumental' in the sense that there is no value higher to them which presupposes their realisation for its own actualisation. But at higher level the distinction between the intrinsic and instrumental values is not there. The values like 'Truth', 'Beauty', and 'Goodness' are regarded as the ultimate values. The intrinsicity of Truth, Beauty and Goodness, is supposed to consist in their being the highest in the hierarchy and the ultimate object of human life. The question whether these values are distinct from each other is difficult to answer. Daya Krishna observes:

Truth seems to be a characteristic of propositions and the fact that a proposition is true seems to give it a certain sort of value even if what the proposition seeks to refer to is a disvaluational state of affairs. But it does not seem to be a very high sort of value, except in the secondary sense of being 'worth striving for'. In fact, it seems to be an 'instrumental' value par excellence. (155)

The idea of Truth can be understood in three ways. One is metaphysical, another is ethical, and the third is logical. The capital 'T' stands for metaphysical Truth. The metaphysical Truth is Truth of all truths. The ethical truth has instrumental value. Logical truth is related to propositions which can either be true or false. The metaphysical truth is the ultimate truth.

Good may either be understood in the generic sense of 'value' or in the specific sense of moral good. In the former case, it connotes no specific or distinct meaning; while in the latter, it refers to a type of values which can be realised only in the pursuit of other values. Daya Krishna observes:

Moral values are second-level values which presuppose other kinds of values and their pursuit by some human will. This 'pursuit' presupposes the contrast between the 'is' and the 'ought' not merely in the world of objects but in that of the subject as well. When this contrast ceases in the world of the subject, the person seems to pass into a state which has generally been known by the name of 'spirituality'. (156)

Here, there is only a creativity appears to be some sort of a supreme concretised harmony that cannot but be felt as Perfect Beauty. Buddha, Christ and Gandhi seem to be the symbols of such a transformation.

In the sense of moral value, the distinction between 'is' and 'ought' would necessarily remain. It would, therefore only be in the secondary sense of 'worth striving for' that a state in which the distinction between 'is' and 'ought' has been overcome can be called 'good'. Good, therefore, in the sense of moral values, though occupying a very high place in the hierarchy of values, does not occupy the highest. Beauty may be described as some sort of a concretised harmony. Russell finds mathematics beautiful. The spiritual personality is the concretised Beauty par excellence. The personality which is the substratum of all values, itself becomes a Living embodiment of values. The difference in the two characterisations results from the difference in standpoint from which we view the spiritual personality. If we view it from the side of the subject, the personality appears to be the prius of values.

The distinction between 'instrumental' and 'intrinsic' continues all through the realm and that no value is merely 'intrinsic' without being at the same time 'instrumental'. But with aesthetic value, we seem to pass into another realm. In this stage of value awareness, fact and value are inextricably bound up together. Any attempt to separate the two seems sheer abstraction. The age-old discussion of 'matter' and 'form' in the field of aesthetics seems positively to suggest that the aesthetic content cannot be conceived apart from its form or pattern of organisation. In fact, the 'form' itself may become the pure aesthetic 'content' as in the abstract art. The dissolution of the distinction between fact and value in the case of Beauty seems to suggest that it is in Beauty that we reach the highest point in the hierarchy of values.

But there are second-level values – values realised in the pursuit of other values. These were designated as the moral values. The contrast between the 'is' and 'ought' is an essential feature of this level. Yet, when the sufficiency of the objective value of Beauty gets realised in the life of the subject, we pass on to another sphere which can hardly be called moral. 'The spiritual' or the

'Holy' seems somehow to describe the state better. Of course, it is not the words but the difference connoted by the words that needs to be emphasised. The Life of the Person instead of finding its justification, worth or value in some end external to itself becomes its own absolute justification. Values were always, to some extent, self-justified but there also was that straining outwards, that movement beyond themselves. Personality is the substratum of all values. But spiritual values transcend the personality. It is the highest value and hence, when valuationally realised, is the completely intrinsic and ultimate value that can be met with in human experience. Beauty, like all other values, exhibits differences of intensity in its valuational exemplification but, at its apex stands the spiritual personality. The spiritual person is self-sufficient. In spiritual awareness the distinction between subject and object is diminished.

The three supreme values of Truth, Beauty and Goodness reveal, then, valuational differences between themselves. There is a realm beyond worldly realm where value seems to stand in its absolute self sufficiency. This is the realm of the spirit where existence seems to get its supreme and ultimate justification from the sense of value. The spiritual value transcends the duality of subjective and objective values.



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## Reflection on the Distinction between the Active and Contemplative Values

Ram C. Majhi

**Abstract:**

Daya Krishna, in his article “The Active and Contemplative Values” thinks that there are values. He also believes that there is a distinction between what he calls ‘the active values’ and ‘the contemplative values’. The distinction between these two types of values is real and radical. The active values are opposed to the contemplative values. They cannot be integrated. Further, he claims that understanding this distinction will help one understand the realm of values, personalities and cultures. This paper aims to reflect on these claims and see if these claims sustain the philosophical scrutiny. I argue that the distinction does not help one understand personalities and cultures. The distinction makes sense in some specific social and political contexts.

**Keywords:** Active Values, Contemplative Values, Personality, Culture.

Daya Krishna, in his article “The Active and Contemplative Values” thinks that there are values. He also believes that there is a distinction between what he calls ‘the active values’ and ‘the contemplative values’. The distinction between these two types of values is real and radical. The active values are opposed to the contemplative values. They cannot be integrated. Further, he claims that understanding this distinction will help one understand the realm of values, personalities and cultures. This paper aims to reflect on these claims and see if these claims sustain the philosophical scrutiny.

Let us first see why Daya Krishna does think that there are values. He says that man is perpetually dissatisfied with things as they are. These ‘things’ are one’s self, other persons, social and natural states of affairs. Man *feels* that things can be different and they ought to be different. Man’s dissatisfaction and feeling disclose that there are values. One way to understand man’s dissatisfaction is that if a change of personal, social or natural phenomenon is not possible, then the dissatisfaction concerning these phenomena is pointless. The matter ends there. Now, if things can change and there is discontent for the things as they are, then things ought to change; because if things wouldn’t change, then the discontent or ‘perpetual dissatisfaction’ as Daya Krishna calls it would continue and that is not a desirable situation for a man. Daya Krishna of course does not want to establish the ontological status of values on the undesirability of perpetual dissatisfaction of man. He seems to ensure the authentic existence of values on the feeling of the man about the undesirability of things as they are and not on man’s discontent arising out of his cognisance of things as they are. He seems to give the impression that values are there and man’s discontent and his feeling undesirability of the things as they are indicators of their existence. However, perpetual dissatisfaction about things as they are is not necessarily an indicator of moral discord. It will be an indicator only if it arises out of a judgement that things ought to be different from what they are. So, the judgement that things ought to be different from what they are is the real indicator of the existence of values. Daya Krishna wishes to make values independent of human judgement. Values have objective existence for Daya Krishna and they are the source of man’s feeling the undesirability of the current status of the things and hence the source of his perpetual dissatisfaction. Here, I will not go into the debate about whether values are there to be discovered or they are generated from human aspiration and prescription. I will assume that the ontological status of values is yet to be decided.

Now let us focus on the distinction between the active values and the contemplative values. Active values are said to be pursued when a man engages himself in activity concerning the other: persons, social or natural states of affairs to bring out a moral change. Contemplative values are said to be pursued when a man engages in activity concerning him for a moral change.

The distinction lies primarily in the content of what the consciousness actually seeks and the implications this has for the consciousness itself. The consciousness that is contemplatively oriented, seeks a state of its own being which it feels to be supremely significant in terms of the actually felt and lived experience of the psyche. The seeking of active values, on the other hand, is not concerned with the type of consciousness that one enjoys oneself but rather with continuous engagement in an activity which may probably help others or achieve a certain state of affairs in the natural or the social world. (212)

What Daya Krishna says here is that if a man is engaged in an activity that morally enriches his lived experience, he is pursuing contemplative values. Lived experience has a moral worth of a different kind than that of a man who is engaged in an activity that brings morally significant change for another person, social or natural state of affairs.

One seeks contemplative values, nurtures them or develops them. He is engaged in an activity to produce something concerned with one's being. Such a person is different from a person who is engaged in an activity to produce something good for others, society or nature. Since contemplative values and active values are opposed to each other, it follows that a self-seeking person cannot be the other-seeking person. It is the being that is the centre of attention in the case of contemplative values. What matters most is the achievement of a state of consciousness, valuable, meaningful, and free in itself (217).

Daya Krishna cites three cases where contemplative values are pursued: the case of a mystic, the case of an addict and the case of a romantic lover. The mystic and the addict have a minimal relationship with the world of objects, the world of the other (217). Both seek the achievement of a particular state of consciousness. The mystic could dispense with God actual or imagined for he is only concerned with his consciousness helped by his own will and imagination. The case of a romantic lover is the same as the mystic. He or she is engaged with her or his lover. The actual lover could be dispensed with. The subjective other who is part of his or her imagination may ultimately be dispensed with. Only the addict has the minimal dependence on the other, the substance!

It is really difficult to appreciate how such states of consciousness can be valuable, meaningful and free in itself. The case of an addict is not a good example of contemplative values. Moreover, to the extent a mystic or a romantic lover is engaged in his contemplation, the other, actual or imagined has to be the very core or part of his or her consciousness, to the extent self-seeking he or she may be. In one sense, however, the other, actual or imagined, is insignificant for the self is the primary and the self is directed to itself. But, however important lived experience might be, however valuable and meaningful and free in itself it might be, the other, actual or imagined, for the mystic as well as the romantic lover, is as vivid and significant as it can be. The other is never

dispensed with. It is not just a requirement of logic. It is a requirement for the said psychic phenomenon. Can we understand Rādhā's ecstasy for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the devotional love of Mīrā for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and the spiritual longing of Paramhansa for mother Kālī without the other? Will lived experience be more valuable, meaningful without the other, actual or imagined? Daya Krishna cites the example of contemplating the beauty of nature which sounds convincing in that case. But there are cases as mentioned above where the point he tries to make lacks conviction.

Now let us look at the active values. Here, one is not engrossed in oneself but with the other: persons, social or natural states of affairs. It is characterised by an essential dependence on others for the success of action in realising the values (214). Cooperation from others is required where the other is an impersonal institution for effective action. If it is not available, coercion is applied. Freedom is lost. Daya Krishna gives the examples of Stalin and Hitler to make his point. Allegiance to impersonal institutions like family, nation or community creates a conflict between personal moral sense and public moral sense in the sense that what one may judge as wrong personally may concede it as right as a member of the institution. True, all of these happen in cases where a collective decision is taken at a level where the individual is remotely linked to the decision. One may not think he is responsible for the decision of the community. J. Glover in his *Humanity: A Moral History of Twentieth Century* speaks of hundreds of such cases. But, what shall he say about Gandhi, Martin Luther King Junior, and Nelson Mandela? All of them spoke of collective action, individual's participation and freedom. Gandhi rejected the distinction between personal morality and public morality.

Daya Krishna says that personalities and cultures can be understood at their deepest levels, in terms of the primacy of the values pursued over the other and the direction one adopts while engaging in an activity so far as the values one is inclined to pursue (219). Let us first understand these concepts of 'primacy' and 'direction' about the active and the contemplative values. If one is pursuing contemplative values, that does not imply that the active values are completely absent in his activities. What is more significant in his case is the primacy of contemplative values over active values. The contemplative values would permit action only on the most minimal scale that is required. Similarly, active values would permit contemplation only to the extent that it is necessary to the action (218). If one is pursuing contemplative values, he is directed towards it and makes the action meaningless. One who is inclined towards pursuing the active values leaves little time or capacity or even inclination to 'stand and stare' (218).

Now the question is this: does this distinction between the active values and the contemplative values, and the notions 'primacy' and 'direction' help us have a philosophical understanding of personalities and cultures? Did Stalin, for

example, pursue active or contemplative values? What can we say about Hitler, Gandhi or Vivekananda? What can we say about the great tradition of *ṛṣi*? Were they pursuing contemplative values without much concern for the welfare of society? Can we think of Indian culture as the result of a group of individuals' engagement with active values but not with contemplative values? I think not.

I think that the distinction is relevant and pertinent in a fascist and autocratic regime where an individual's freedom is frowned upon. Probably, Daya Krishna had concerns about the individual in such a regime while writing about and emphasising the significance of the distinction. His example of Stalin and Hitler suggests that.

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## Daya on Alternative Perspective on Indian Philosophy

P. R. Bhat

### **Abstract:**

Daya Krishna recognizes that India has a rich philosophical tradition, but is pained to see its irrelevance to present intellectual concerns. The exact translation from Sanskrit to English is not possible. Doing philosophy in the native language is better and hence Indian philosophy can only be done in Sanskrit. It is wrongly believed that the main goal of Indian Philosophy is spiritual. This view undermines the other three values: *Arthaśāstra*, *Kamasūtra*, and *Dharmaśāstra*. Our present situation must be linked to our traditional philosophy. Attempts to make traditional scholars interact with the scholars of current philosophers have failed. As the first step towards improving the situation, Daya Krishna takes up the task of finding the gaps in the thinking of traditional Indian philosophers. This is taken as contributing negatively to Indian philosophy due to the mindset of traditional scholars. By very nature, philosophy is a rational activity and hence arguments and counter-arguments are advanced to establish or demolish certain philosophical positions, values and goals while doing philosophy according to Daya Krishna.

**Keywords:** Rational Method, Spiritual, Mokṣa, Language, Criticism, Ethics, Institution.



### **Introduction**

Indian philosophical community knows Daya Krishna as the leading philosophical force in academic circles in India for his long active involvement as a thinker, writer and editor. He has served as an academician more institutions than one and had an active role in conducting seminars and conferences even after he retired from the teaching assignment at Rajasthan University. One could distinguish his early works from his later works based on his orientations in them. One could find in him a fierce critic. In academic debates and interactions, he would not admit a point unless it meets the high critical standard set by him. As the editor of the leading Indian journal called Journal of Indian Council of Philosophical Research, he has served the philosophical community constantly. He would point out strong and weak points in the manuscripts and make constructive suggestions for the authors to improve the research papers. His concern and love for philosophy are unlimited. There is no second person who could fill the vacuum created by his demise.

One would find the global orientation in his early writings. He held the view like others who have trained abroad in philosophy in English that philosophy is global and hence the distinction between Indian and Western philosophy is not on the logical ground. Except that the philosophy originated from India, there is nothing that distinguishes Indian philosophy from western philosophy. The epistemic issues, the logical issues, the metaphysical issues and ethical issues, if they are genuine, they belong to the whole of mankind was the opinion expressed by a notable number of scholars trained in western philosophy. However, those who are trained by Indian scholars had a Sanskrit background and believed that Indian philosophy could be done only in Sanskrit since traditionally that is the language that is used by scholars and ready vocabulary, academic literature expressing different viewpoints is available in Sanskrit.

### **Differently Trained Indian Philosophers**

Daya Krishna's attention was drawn to the claim that philosophical discussion does not occur between the two groups namely, the western English trained philosophers and the Indian trained Sanskrit scholars. Daya Krishna and his contemporary colleagues thought that language could be a barrier and made several attempts to overcome this barrier by inviting both Sanskrit scholars and analytically trained philosophers to have meaningful philosophical interaction with the aid of some who are reasonably good in both. Daya Krishna and his academic friends thought that if somehow members of these two groups are brought together some meaningful academic interaction could take place. However, these attempts have not yielded fruitful results. The very orientation of the training by the west and the Indian were different. A critical attitude is encouraged in the English trained scholars and criticism without advancing alternative view is taken to be an academic sin by traditional Indian scholars.

What is present in Indian tradition has to be linked to the present philosophical thinking is the felt need of the contemporary English trained philosophers. Contemporary Indian thinkers trained traditionally appreciate scholarship more than originality and creativity. Though Indian philosophical tradition has been very critical and innovative, the present condition is not conducive for creative philosophy. Everything worth saying has been already said in the *Vedas* and *Upanṣads* is the opinion of traditional scholars today. Though the same *Vedas* and *Upanṣads* have given birth to many schools of thought and that was possible because creative philosophical interpretations were not disallowed. In the present situation, many traditionally trained Indian scholars opine that anything worth saying has been already said and hence only scholarship is possible and originality is difficult. Whereas, the English trained philosophers think that progress in Indian philosophy will be possible only if improve the situation by adequately modifying the weak part in Indian philosophy and further adding strength to the meritorious thesis. Progress in philosophy can be eliminating weak thesis and creatively adding something to a defensible idea.

English trained scholars do not see the relevance of traditional debates since the present seems to have been not linked to the tradition. There might be historical and political reasons why the traditional Indian philosophy is de-linked to present day life, but there is an urgent need to establish this link between the two to make philosophy relevant to the present generation. All the attempts to create a favourable philosophical environment to bring traditional scholars and western trained philosophical scholars had little success. Daya believed that something needs to be done. He chose to venture himself to provoke both traditionally trained scholars and his contemporary colleagues including bright young minds to the task of reconstructing Indian philosophy by pointing out the limitations of Indian philosophical thinking as the first step. This he thought would be the logical step towards bridging this gap since there would naturally be some intellectual reaction to his criticism he thought. I guess, he went wrong even in this. Instead of taking his criticisms seriously and working on them, many preferred to keep silent and overlook or even negate his criticisms having any value. His thinking was right from the perspective of the critical philosophy, but Sanskrit scholars did not find his attempt as noble. They preferred rejecting his criticisms rather than accept them and work on finding appropriate philosophical solutions and extend a helping hand to rebuild Indian philosophy. However, some young minds might have been positively influenced by Daya Krishna, but we are yet to see the good fruits of his efforts.

His discussion on *puruṣārtha* is one such step and he firmly believes that shaking up the complacency set in is essential to find a better philosophical alternative. Largely agreeing with Daya, we argue in this paper that oral tradition in India had its impact on the formation of a certain attitude. We also argue that Sanskrit is a dead language; the scholars are discouraged to make any changes in

the philosophical position even if they find certain arguments convincing. The ontological claims made in the *Vedas* and *Upaniṣads* about the absolute nature of reality had its impact on the attitude of philosophers. Liberation being an eternal state, the philosophical possibility of any change is eliminated. The main reason for not seriously taking the criticisms raised by Daya in his articles seems to be the attitude that Indian philosophy cannot be done in English. We argue that this too is a myth. Hopefully, any constructive arguments attempting to improve and but not criticize Indian philosophy simply for the sake of it will attract the attention of Indian philosophers.

This article has the following philosophical points to make. First, Daya Krishna is a philosopher and not simply a scholar. Second, his early view on what is philosophy has changed by the time he started writing on Indian Philosophy. Third, the role played by language is wider than what he has claimed as a young philosopher. Fourth, his analysis of *artha* and *kāma* contribute much to philosophical literature. Fifth, his analysis of karma theory is quite valid and needs to be further supported by creative works. We shall address these issues not necessarily in the same order in which they are mentioned here.

It is a fact that a large amount of philosophical literature in India is available only in Sanskrit. However, fortunately, some of the works have been translated and some scholars who know both Sanskrit and English have written in English making use of the wealth of knowledge available in Sanskrit. It is a debatable issue as to how authentic are these writings. Further, there is a distinction between what is known as old Sanskrit and New Sanskrit. Not many can claim the authenticity of old Sanskrit since Indian tradition was oral and vulnerable to variations since the script was not developed. Even when phonetics is quite developed, we notice that an alien pronouncing sentence in our mother tongue sounds strange. No two good scholars are expected to agree on all aspects of any translation or transliteration. No two languages have identical grammar and vocabulary; given these facts, one could speak of acceptable translation or a bad translation. Especially when it is the matter of philosophy or literature because of their very nature perfect translation is difficult to provide. Finding a very satisfactory translation is difficult partly because technical terms have to be interpreted. When the element of interpretation enters, obviously one cannot call the translation literal. It would not be far away from the truth if one wants to stick to the position that philosophical literature can never be translated accurately. Such a strict view, if held, has the following philosophical presuppositions. First, language and thought are intimately related but not identical. Since this is the case, identical thought cannot be expressed in another language especially when it is a matter of core technical term. For instance, the notion of self in India cannot be fully captured by the concept of mind in English. However, one who is familiar with both the traditions Western and Indian, if the issue posed is the mind-body problem; one could reasonably give the *Sāṃkhya* response to this problem.

Similarly, if the problem posed is about the nature of Brahman in Indian philosophy, any rational philosopher would find it difficult to maintain both: Brahman is indescribable and yet he can be described as *sat*, *cit*, and *ānanda*. Second, strictly speaking, no language has synonyms. This is because language is a tool hence pragmatics is at the basis of developing a language. If a word is there to perform a certain function, one would not go for coining another word. Thus, we normally distinguish the shades of meaning of words. Two synonyms have similar meanings, but they have different shades of meaning. If this is the case with two synonymous words within a language, exact translation between two languages especially the technical terms in philosophy having different cultural orientations would be next to impossible.

There is some truth in the claim that one should use a native language to communicate better. The niceties of the language cannot be captured in a translated language. Of course, this is the aesthetic and poetic aspect of language. If one is doing philosophy of arts, poetry etc., the difficulties may be genuine. But if philosophy is a cognitive and rational activity the way Daya has conceived it, there should not be immense difficulty in conceptually pursuing philosophical issues. Fine-tuning every shade of meaning of a word would not be necessary unless one is doing philosophy of language especially if one is engaging in ambiguity or semantics. If substantive philosophy, such as human freedom is taken up for examination, this could be done in any well-developed language. Thus, it appears that it is a lame issue that one cannot do Indian philosophy unless one knows Sanskrit. If we entertain such questions, then one cannot do any philosophy which is not born in our land. Further, one cannot do ancient Indian philosophy unless we know old Sanskrit. One cannot do ancient philosophy unless one lived in ancient India following anthropological claims that one cannot fully understand an alien culture unless one lives in that culture for some considerable duration. Thus, one cannot do any philosophy unless it is your own. This absurd conclusion is not warranted. The implication of this is not acceptable. We do teach and research in philosophy that belongs to another nation and language.

### **Daya Krishna on the Nature of Philosophy**

Daya believes that philosophy is a rational activity; he expects arguments and counter-arguments while philosophers are debating about philosophical issues. He believes that philosophical arguments being rational ought to be cognitive. This is the main reason why he is interested in showing that the claim that Indian philosophy is spiritual is misleading. He takes all the pain to show why this is so by systematically arguing with facts and proving the point. Even if we consider the final goal is *mokṣa*, there are other values that one discusses. *Arthaśāstra*, *Kāmasūtra*, *Dharmaśāstra* are discussed apart from *Mokṣaśāstra* in Indian philosophy. Given these hard facts, it is very

misleading to claim that Indian philosophy is spiritually oriented. Liberation is said to come at the end of one's life. Either one gets *Videha Mukti* after death or one gets it when one is alive which is known as *Jivan Mukti*. It is easy to mistake anything that comes at the end as the goal. If I claim that the aim of life is death, no one can disprove me since that is the last thing that can happen to someone. If one asks the individuals concerned, they speak of many things as their goal. Who has to decide the goal of a person? Invariably it is the individual in question who has to decide his own goal. We see human beings struggling to get the other three values and also one might long for liberation. This would not make liberation a prime goal for everyone.

The path to liberation prescribed is generally practical oriented. That is to say, some yogic method of concentration, or concentration while performing one's duty, or devotion in some form or the other or meditation of some sort or the other. If liberation is the main goal of human being, then it is bound to be non-rational activity. And such a non-rational activity is bound to be non-philosophical according to Daya. Even *Advaita* philosophy that supposedly speaks of a path to liberation through knowledge, would not appreciate being rational while trying to attain liberation. *śravaṇa*, *manana*, and *nidhidhyāsana* are important for liberation in *Advaita*. One should repeatedly hear about the nature of truth and one should try to convince oneself by raising doubts if there is one. This is so because, concentration by arresting the mental activities is impossible if one is rational and searching for the truth. The third one emphasizes the meditational aspect. Thus, the right mental state has to be achieved even to realize the ultimate nature of reality in *Advaita*. And this realization that one is *Brahman* comes through a unique experience called '*Brahmanubhava*'. This special experience gives the merging of the subject with the *Brahman*. Though this experience is supposed to give knowledge; by no means this is knowledge in the ordinary sense of the term. None of the sources of knowledge is involved and hence the term 'knowledge' is not applicable here even if we stretch the use of the term. Realization is an entirely different type of knowledge in comparison to all our knowledge that we acquire including the rational way of knowing things. Realization is one unique thing as against all other kinds of knowledge that one has.

In contrast, the philosophical issues about *Arthaśāstra*, *Kāmasūtra*, *Dharmaśāstra* are rationally debated. To be rational is to be logical and logic is universally intelligible. A valid argument is valid in all possible worlds or all contexts. The validity does not depend on the cultures and religious or otherwise values. To be precise, logic is beyond subjective variations and is universal if adequately formulated. Subjective elements do not enter into the domain of logic. Cultural preferences too do not change the validity or otherwise of an argument. Hence, even the translations if adequately done cannot hamper the logical feature of the argument. To be clear, the philosophical debates based on rational

arguments on the three worldly values mentioned above cannot get adversely affected by the language that is used.

One could extend similar argument to cover the issues about epistemology, logic, ethics and metaphysics. Issues about all these domains can be rationally discussed and debated advancing sound arguments. To this extent, philosophical activity can be done in any adequately developed language. Sanskrit, English, German etc., are all philosophically well-developed languages. One could discuss the issues about all branches of philosophy including applied philosophies such as meta-ethics, professional ethics, applied ethics, philosophy of language, philosophy of literature, philosophical logic and so on.

Some philosophers fail to keep the element of attitude different from the element of rationality. Such philosophers get carried away by their emotions and are not able to accept the validity of the arguments if conclusions are not favourable to them. These could be considered persuasive arguments. Persuasive arguments succeed sometimes because of the emotional elements in them. The rational approach is different from this. Intellectuals can be convinced because the argument is valid. Those who are emotional, even invalid arguments can convince them if the argument matches with the attitude of the person. Philosophers are supposed to be rational beings and are expected to be convinced only if the valid arguments are advanced. Even if a persuasive argument is advanced, the argument must be valid first and then the conviction in the conclusion.

Daya is highly concerned about the ethical behaviour of the individuals. This he expresses in several of his writings. In the paper "Active and the Contemplative Values", an important point he makes is that the values that affect others are important and the contemplative values that matter to oneself are not so important. One could, as some of his critics have pointed out (see Sogani) the action has to be performed eventually by the individual using his motor organs. The important point that Daya makes here is the institutional action or social action versus individual action. Actions that have moral consequences are to be valued more than actions that have little consequences. I suspect this is the main reason why he wrote an article to show how karma theory is not ethical in the normal sense of the term.

*Karma* theory attributes the credits or discredits of an action to an individual. No one else can gain or put to a loss for my failure or success. Even if I kill someone, the consequence is that a certain demerit is accrued to my account. And the effect of that action too should be reaped by me. Thus, in the *karma* theory, whether the action is individual or institutional, the credit or discredit is given to only the concerned individual. Ethics does not enter much in this kind of situation. If any, it would be the ethics of the self and not of others. Ethics in this account would be self-centred and not other-centred. Thus, social condemnation, social appreciation for ethical behaviour becomes irrelevant. As a consequence, social philosophy, moral philosophy etc., do not get the importance they deserve.

Daya attempts to show the need for modification of the notion of *karma* such that the notion is linked with what is called ethical in the normal sense of the term (*Counter Perspective* 183).

Early Daya seems to be highly influenced by Wittgenstein. His thesis which is published in 1955 where Daya seems to claim that philosophy is the name that is given to conceptual confusion and the attempt that is made to clarify and solve such confusions (Hirst 381-82). Though Daya seems to claim that there is continuity in his understanding of what is philosophy, this does not seem to be the case. His early philosophical position seems to suggest that the task of philosophy is therapeutic; philosophy is a disease and that needs to be cured by clarifying the philosophical confusions. Wittgenstein held in addition to this view that philosophy leaves everything as it is. As mentioned above, Daya does not believe that karma theory should clarify the confusion; he believes that there is the need to revise our view and link it up with our modern ethical contexts. Simply believing that suffering is the result of my past action will not do; we need to speak of how we can reduce the misery of human beings institutionally has to be worked out. Daya has graduated from being simply a scholar trying to clarify and remove confusions to a critical philosophical thinker.

There is a thick chance that many misunderstand Daya on the count that he has criticized Indian philosophy extensively and hence his contribution is negative. In his preface to *Indian Philosophy: A Counter Perspective*, he makes it clear that he wants to change the mindset of Indian thinkers (vii-viii). And he has written several papers keeping this in mind. His analysis of the present situation in India is due to the lack of an alternative way of looking at the issues in Indian philosophy. However, he has been proven wrong, not because there were many alternative philosophies, but because his criticism instead of inspiring evoked a certain kind of apathy. This was because, as Daya himself responded to some questions by saying Indian philosophy cannot be done in English, only in Sanskrit one could do Indian Philosophy. This cannot be Daya's view. He must be offering a *reductio-da-absurdum* argument. Given the fact that Sanskrit is a dead language, even Sanskrit scholars cannot do Indian philosophy. This is because even these scholars cannot relate the Sanskrit texts to their lived situation. Philosophy should be relevant to our context and rationally one should relate the traditional ideas with the present socio-cultural reality without failing to reflect on ethical issues.

One could understand why there is a difficulty for Sanskrit scholars in becoming critical. As mentioned earlier we had an oral tradition. Oral tradition by necessity had to optimize the use of memory. To do that they had to invent the mechanism through which *ślokas* and *mantras* are easily retained and remembered. This led to compact hymns. One could not afford any creativity since the originality will be lost in such an oral tradition. Only in the case of written text, could one think of critical thinking and analysis and *Upianṣads* were of this kind.

Furthermore, since scholarly work was done in Sanskrit, and Sanskrit became a dead language, the ability and the confidence with which earlier thinkers were able to debate could not be done by the scholars of the present century. Even the *Gurukula* system has contributed to this attitude. In our civilization, elders are respected due to their experience and knowledge. The learned person is given a higher status in our society. Given this, since Guru is always aged and respectable, the words of the Guru are not criticized if one could afford to avoid. This attitude of Indian students also contributed to uncritical acceptance of what is handed down through our civilization.

### How to be Critical?

Daya Krishna thought, of course rightly, that the first step towards improving the situation is to criticize if not give an alternative answer. One must have an answer to the philosophical question. If one could rationally negate a claim that itself is taken as a philosophical contribution since even to negate one has to produce a sound philosophical argument. Daya Krishna minimally does this in any of his writings. However, he has not given an alternative system always and therefore, his attempt is misperceived by some and treated his writing as negative.

Tiwari in his essay “Daya Krishna’s Conception of Philosophy: Some Reflections” maintains that the main function of philosophy of language is referring. He quotes Daya in support of his position that Daya’s philosophical view has not substantially changed. To my mind, Daya’s view of philosophy and his use of philosophical language have changed substantially. Daya’s analysis of *kāma*, for instance, is not simply providing clarification. He points out that any attempt to interpret *kāma* as desire, a subsequent question would face us: is a desire for knowledge also a desire? Furthermore, he brings the question of *niṣkāma karma*. Is this a desireless action? Can human beings perform using their motor organ without desire? And then the analysis of *karma* needs modification. In what way *karma* is related to *padārtha*? Two meanings of *padārtha* could be brought out, one the substantial aspect of the *pada*, i.e., the ontological aspect functioning like a referential expression and the other the meaning, or the value, of the *pada*.

To claim these discussions as a mere clarification of the conceptual confusion is to grossly undermine the philosophical importance of the issues raised. Furthermore, in what way the categories of *Vaiśeṣika* are related to *mokṣa*? Or to what extent these different schools of thought have accepted *Vedic* authority? These questions are quite probing. Any satisfactory answer to a host of questions raised by Daya Krishna would result in new and respectable philosophy. Thus, Daya Krishna has raised several philosophical questions, not intending to undermine the importance of Indian philosophy but to raise the standard of doing Indian philosophy. I do not doubt that one



could do much better philosophy if the right philosophical questions are raised at the right time and look at our philosophical tradition sympathetically. This sympathy we seem to need otherwise, we tend to neglect even if good philosophical questions are asked with good intention. Let us consider one such example below.

The general description of *karma* theory goes something like this: We are what we are because of our past actions in this life as well as a previous life. Thus, we are reaping the fruits of past actions which is called *prārabdha karma*. Whatever is our ability and knowledge, we are going to make certain decisions at present and perform certain actions. These actions will have their fruits which will be in store. They are called *sancita karma*. And in future, we are going to make certain decisions and are going to perform certain actions and they would also have their results. They may be called *āgāmika karma*. This is the bare minimum of *karma* theory. Since past life is also involved; and future life also is linked to *karma* theory, one could reasonably say that it has a cosmic aspect to it as well.

Link the idea of cloning to this *karma* theory. It is proven beyond doubt that one could create human clones. Though work is in progress in certain countries, such research in certain countries is debarred because of ethical problems. If we keep aside the ethical part and make use of thought experiment to bring home the metaphysical point, there is no ethical issue involved in this. Assume that a person P is cloned and two more individuals are created say C and D. The present situation with the *karma* theory would be that all the three P, C and D have the same *prārabdha karma* identical with the *karma* of P since we have produced two more individuals from P. Now, imagine that P, C and D perform differently and accumulate different *karma* at the *sancita* level. Now the difficulty is of giving the credit or discredit to all these three individuals. Since they acted differently, their *sancita* karma should be different. However, they cannot be three individuals since it is only one consciousness that exists in P, which has become C and D as well. The difficulty in maintaining this is that C might die but P and D might be alive. How is this possible? Further, if D becomes *Jīvanmukta*, would the other two also liberated? If we claim that P, C and D are different individuals, we should then admit that consciousness can be divided into different individuals. If this is expected, then the metaphysical notion of one individual and one soul would have to be abandoned. What happens to the mind-body problem here? One needs to face the same difficulty which Sāṃkhya philosophers faced and declare that there are many *puruṣas*. In our case, even that would not be satisfactory since P could be liberated without C and D or in some other combination. And one might die and the other two might remain alive. Thus, we might have to explain the hard facts of life and death. We may be compelled to say that consciousness is the property of the body.

**Concluding Remark**

To conclude, clarity would be the backbone of constructive philosophy. If one is not clear on core issues in philosophy, one cannot expect enlightening philosophical literature from such a person. Daya Krishna was rightly seeking clarity on many issues of Indian philosophy, and in this process he made many important and critical points. For him, good philosophy emerges only from a good methodology and he rightly prioritized a good method of doing philosophy over simply advancing some unsystematic arguments. He has rightly influenced many budding philosophers to do serious and creative philosophy.

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## Daya Krishna on *Adhyāsa* in Sāṃkhya and Advaita

Godabarisha Mishra

### Abstract:

According to all schools of Indian Philosophy, an error is understood as perceiving a particular thing as what it is not. This is called '*adhyāsa*' (superimposition) which means that there is a confusion between two different things which are identified in some way. On the ontological status of the erroneously perceived object, there is difference of opinion and there are many views propounded by different schools. Śaṅkara in the beginning of his *Śārirakasūtra-bhāṣya* analyses *adhyāsa* by juxtaposing two terms '*asmad*', 'I' and '*yuṣmad*', 'thou'. Among them the 'I' is real (absolutely real) and 'you' which stands for all other things that are different from 'I' (non-I) is not real and does not have independent existence, it is superimposed (*kalpitā*) on 'I'. In Advaita, like a rope-snake illusion, even the empirical usages and experiences like 'I am a man' comes in the above category of superimposition where 'being a man' is superimposed on the self, i.e. 'I'. Daya Krishna in one of his articles claims that the Advaita concept of *adhyāsa* is based on that of Sāṃkhya which has not been noticed by the scholars all along. This article is an attempt to examine the claims of Daya Krishna and to show that (a) the philosophical position of Advaita Vedānta is different from that of Sāṃkhya school and (b) as far as *adhyāsa* is concerned there is no Sāṃkhyan *adhyāsa* different from Advaitic *adhyāsa* though given the foundational tenets of both the systems there is difference as far as the ontological status of the object of error.

**Keywords:** Advaita, Sāṃkhya, *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*, *Adhyāsa*, *Adhyāropa*, *Apavāda*, Daya Krishna.

[N]irūpayitum ārabdhe nikhilairapi paṇḍitaiḥ  
ajñānam purataḥ teṣāṁ bhāti kākṣāsu kāsucit  
(*Pañcadaśī* 6.139)

[When all the wise persons of the world try to determine the nature of the world at some stage or other, they do encounter ignorance in some stage or other.]

He [Daya Krishna] fails to grasp the force of Śaṅkara's logic in radically distinguishing the objects of intuition of "I" and the intuition of "this." No one can presume to have understood the Advaita who does not appreciate the absolute opposition (*atyanta-vilakṣaṇa*) of the respective objects of these intuitions. It is difficult, under the circumstances to believe that Daya Krishna has entered into the spirit of Advaita Vedānta or that he is competent to find fault with the father of the system. (Malkani 81)

### Introduction

Starting from the period of Socrates till date, philosophy as a discipline has distinguished itself in the art of questioning the established views and that has become the basis for discovering new horizons of thinking and creation of new ideas. Most of the time, scholars tread with the trend that is already given and very rarely they depart from the established views and find the explanations unacceptable and propose alternative modes of analysis. Such rare scholarship of questioning, explaining and opening up new horizons of thinking is seen in the writings of the Indian thinkers like Śaṅkara, Nāgārjuna and many others who have perceived the reality in different ways and come up with different explanations and this trend has been coming down in an unbroken manner till our times. Even during the colonial and post-colonial period, the scenario remained nearly the same. There were contemporary Indian philosophers like K.C. Bhattacharya, Sri Aurobindo who have questioned the tradition to give different ways of understanding the reality. Daya Krishna of our times resembled many celebrated Indian thinkers of the yore as well as of the contemporary period and he had the ability to question the given which provided new direction to the recent study of Indian philosophy. He has left behind a hoary of questions which he thought should have been asked and answered if not by the tradition by those who are seriously engaged in Indian philosophy during our times. In one of his articles, "*Adhyāsa* – A Non-Advaitic Beginning in Śaṅkara Vedānta", he has attempted to examine as well as question the Advaita concept of *adhyāsa* and I would take up this question from the traditional standpoint and argue in favor of the Śaṅkara tradition and show how there are gaps in the analysis given by Daya Krishna.

At the very outset, I admire the standpoint taken by Daya Krishna in posing a pertinent question regarding a possible inter-relationship between Sāṃkhya and Advaita as far as *adhyāsa* is concerned. Daya Krishna's position in this essay may be summarized as follows:

1. Even though the concept of superimposition, *adhyāsa*, is common to all systems and not peculiar to Śāṅkara Vedānta alone, the peculiarity of Advaita Vedānta lies in distinctively regarding the content of what it would regard as error. Taking into consideration the content of error, *adhyāsa* would be peculiar to each system.

2. Though there is formal similarity among the schools as far as *adhyāsa* is concerned, considering the content of error, there are many types of *adhyāsa*. This multiplicity of *adhyāsa* is due to the (ontological status of the) object of superimposition and this is different in Sāṅkhya and Advaita since they believe in duality and non-duality respectively. As Daya Krishna puts it, “The assertion of an ultimate difference is the central contention of the Sāṅkhya, while the absolute denial of all ultimate difference is the hard-core of the Advaita assertion” (243).

3. The *adhyāsa* in Sāṅkhya is due to a basic identification between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* that are two disparate and distinct realities like ‘I am this’ which is an error where ‘I’ refers to pure subject, self or *puruṣa*, and ‘this’ to the nature, object or *prakṛti*. The Advaita which is based on an ultimate non-dual entity, assertion of any difference is due to *adhyāsa*. Daya Krishna formulates this with an example like ‘I am not this’ where, (according to him) ‘I’ refers to self, subject or *Ātman* and ‘this’ to nature, object or *Brahman*.

4. In keeping with his above example, Daya Krishna goes on to say that the way Śāṅkara formulates the basic *adhyāsa* seems to be exact opposite of what it ought to be. Śāṅkara’s use of the term ‘*asmad*’ in the sense of ‘I’, ‘we’ or ‘ego’ does not solve the problem since according to Daya Krishna, what it stands for is not the empirical self or plurality of the selves, but the pure ego. Daya Krishna’s reading of the problematic of *Adhyāsa* is that since root of all types of ignorance is the identification of subject with the object in any of its forms and at any of its levels, it is plain and unmitigated Sāṅkhya system and not Advaita at all.

5. If identification is at the heart of the Advaita Vedānta, then how can Śāṅkara define *Adhyāsa*? Two things are to be supposed here. With identity, where is *Adhyāsa*? Either Śāṅkara is not an Advaitin or the logical deduction of Advaitic *Adhyāsa* is wrong. Daya Krishna is of the view that since the deduction about *adhyāsa* in Advaita is logical, we need to find out whether Śāṅkara is an Advaitin at all.

6. He is of the view that in an absolute non-dual position, there can be no *adhyāsa* of any type. ‘If there is nothing else besides one reality, then what is there to be confused with what?’ There is no ‘I’ as opposed to ‘thou’ or any ‘thou’ opposed to the ‘I’. Hence no *adhyāsa* can be spoken of since there is no second; and hence according to Daya Krishna, Advaitic stand on *adhyāsa* is a contradiction in terms.

7. So which is that *adhyāsa* Śāṅkara is talking about? Daya Krishna contends that it is Sāṅkhyan *adhyāsa* that Śāṅkara is speaking about. He quotes Śāṅkara,

[H]ow it is possible that in the interior Self which itself is not an object there should be superimposed objects and their attributes? For everyone superimposes an object only on such other objects as are placed before him and Śaṅkara has said before that the interior Self which is entirely disconnected from the idea of the “thou” (the non-ego) is never an object. (246)

Daya Krishna analyses this stating that *adhyāsa* can occur only between two objects. But in this context, Śaṅkara is emphasizing the term ‘object’ rather than the term ‘two’. Had he emphasized the two, he would have discovered the basic Advaitic objection to *adhyāsa* as stated earlier.

8. Daya Krishna goes on to say that error is untenable and unintelligible in any ontological perspective, non-dualistic or dualistic. In the last analysis, error ought never to have arisen. Both Sāṃkhya and Advaita, Daya Krishna feels, cannot answer the question as to how the confusing identification could ever arise; in Advaita also, the question would be: how could there be any *māyā* if the Brahman alone is real. The identity in this unresolved character of error does not destroy the specific content of error in each system of thought. What they conceive as error in both the systems is not the same.

9. In order to resolve this paradox of Sāṃkhyan beginning and Advaitic ending, Daya Krishna takes the clue from Śaṅkara himself. Śaṅkara says,

[T]he means for right knowledge cannot operate unless there is a knowing personality and because the existence of the latter depends on the erroneous notion that the body, the senses and so on are identical with or belong to the self of the knowing person. (Krishna 247)

Daya Krishna is of the view that here is where Śaṅkara is following Sāṃkhya *adhyāsa* that has been spoken of as the fundamental error in the beginning of his *bhāṣya*. Ontologically, there is no right knowledge very different from the wrong knowledge since both rest on a fundamental error. There would be no knowledge without any *adhyāsa*, this fundamental error. Without this, according to Śaṅkara, no human activity is possible.

10. Next, Daya Krishna goes on to say that the steps Śaṅkara has taken lead to the notion of the indescribable real and not to that of Advaita, or a non-dual reality, which are closely related. The duality of truth and error, pleasure and pain, right or wrong, meaningful or meaningless is endemic to the realms of knowledge, feeling, action and articulation, and all these are rooted in the realm of duality and will vanish at the collapse of the error. Hence ‘*advaita*’ does not mean the assertion of a pure monistic view of reality, but it is the assertion that the real is the realm where the four fold duality mentioned earlier does not apply. According to Daya Krishna, this precisely is the meaning of the term ‘Advaita’.

11. Daya Krishna proposes a way of resolving the problem which could have avoided the Sāṃkhyan beginning for Śaṅkara. He could have said that without differentiating myself from the object, there will be no knowledge, feeling or willing on the part of a person, by which the whole world of knowledge etc. would rest on a fundamental error. This is how the Advaitic *adhyāsa* should have been proposed not the way Śaṅkara does by contraposing 'I' and 'thou'. Daya Krishna says, "It was because all these process presupposed the non-identification of the self with the not-self that they rested on a fundamental error and not because they involved the identification of the self with the non-self" (248). The same conclusion could be reached from two opposite notions of *adhyāsa* because every empirical activity of the person requires both identification and differentiation. The identification is usually with the intellect, mind, senses and the body. The differentiation is between one object and another object and between the whole world of objects and the so-called empirical ego, which is the result of identification.

12. Daya Krishna concludes his article by stating his view that any philosophical system involving identification and differentiation as fundamentally erroneous would lead to the relegation of the whole world of reality to the realm of *māyā*. This is what Śaṅkara does to reach his Advaitic conclusions from Sāṃkhyan premises, on which the Advaitic world-view rests.

### Śaṅkara's Position on *Adhyāsa*

Now I come to analyze the contention of Daya Krishna in which he seems to have shown i) How Śaṅkara has been influenced by Sāṃkhya views in designing his concept of *adhyāsa* and, ii) How Śaṅkara could have escaped this criticism as well as the problem by designing an Advaitic concept of *adhyāsa*. Let me, to start with, state how Śaṅkara has formulated his concept of *adhyāsa* in the beginning of his commentary on the Śāṅkara-sūtras.

The example given by Śaṅkara on *adhyāsa* indicates that he is referring to different instances of perceptual illusion like mistaking a rope for a snake. The three instances of *adhyāsa* he introduces in the *Sūtrabhāṣya* by using expressions like 'some say...', 'others say...' are well known theories of perceptual illusion held by Nyāya, Buddhist and the Prabhākara schools of Pūrva-mīmāṃsā. Though each school has its own name for its theory of epistemological *adhyāsa*, Śaṅkara does not take them to be very different theories. Śaṅkara says that they all constitute one single theory of *adhyāsa* according to which a thing which is 'not that' (*atat*), is taken to be 'that' (*tat*). In the rope-snake illusion, there is no snake at all (*atat*) but yet what is there (*tat*) is mistaken for a snake. That means, what is not there is wrongly perceived to be there. Śaṅkara shows the common characteristics shared by all cases of error that is a particular thing appears as what it really is not. This is why he neither discusses the *khyātivādas* in detail nor refutes them or even explains his own *khyātivāda* like *anirvacanīya-khyāti*, which has been undertaken by post-Śaṅkara Advaitins.



While defining *adhyāsa*, from the epistemological stand-point, Śaṅkara said that a ‘previously seen object’ (silver) is mistaken for what it is not (shell). Therefore, if it is claimed that Brahman is mistaken for the world of experience, the question arises: Is there a ‘previously experienced world’ (like previously experienced silver) for which *Brahman* is mistaken? It surely cannot be so because if there is such a world in addition to *Brahman*, it would precisely be ‘the second’ reality and hence there would indeed be a second reality besides *Brahman* and therefore Advaita cannot be sustained.

Śaṅkara anticipates such an objection from the opponents of *adhyāsa*, and himself raises the question: ‘Since the *ātman* is never the object of any empirical experience [the substratum of illusion like shell and rope are], how can there be any mistaking of *ātman* for something else?’ Also, since mistaking the *ātman* for anything else cannot be a case of epistemological error, a re-definition of *adhyāsa* in purely metaphysical terms becomes essential, and this is what Śaṅkara does in the second definition. He gives a more general definition of *adhyāsa* which is truly in keeping with its timeless character (*anādi ... ananta*), in which any reference to any kind of a ‘previously seen object’ is eliminated because such an object becomes totally irrelevant and pointless.

Now that any kind of existence of a previously experienced object has become thoroughly unnecessary for *adhyāsa*, what is called ‘the other’ – which is ‘anything other than *ātman*’ (*anātman*) – and for which the *ātman* is mistaken, can even be a mere imaginary or false idea (*kalpita* or *mithyā*). Therefore, an actually existing second entity is not at all required for metaphysical *adhyāsa* to operate. This makes Śaṅkara to define the metaphysical *adhyāsa* in the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* by declaring: ‘We say that what is called *adhyāsa* is the cognition in the *atat* of what is *tat* (*adhyāso nāma atasmin tadbuddhiriti avocāma*)’. Before I put forth my rejoinder to the points raised by Daya Krishna, let me briefly state the relationship between Sāṅkhya and Advaita.

### **Sāṅkhya and Advaita Inter-relationship**

The Sāṅkhya School seems to be as old as the *Upaniṣads* and there are a few *Upaniṣads* like *Śvetāśvatara* and *Kaṭha* which contain the ideas of Sāṅkhya. According to Sāṅkhya, the womb of the world is *prakṛti* and it gets activated in the mere presence of *puruṣa*, which is consciousness only. The *prakṛti* evolves for the enjoyment and liberation of the *puruṣa* who gets entangled with *prakṛti* due to its proximity and its understanding that it is pure-consciousness and has nothing to do with *prakṛti* brings about liberation, called as *kaiśalya*. Hence identification (due to *aviveka*) with the *prakṛti* is the *saṁsāra* for the *puruṣa* and de-identification is liberation. In *puruṣa*’s liberation *prakṛti* still remains, and since the *puruṣas* are many, he who has got this discriminative knowledge is liberated and not all. Daya Krishna is of the view that it is due to superimposition of *prakṛti* on the *puruṣa*, there arises the sense of ego and so on the world of bondage and this is the

*adhyāsa* (superimposition) which Śaṅkara has borrowed from the Sāṃkhya school. As stated in the *Śvetāśvatara*, this *prakṛti* is *māyā* (*māyām tu prakṛtim vidyat*) that is the cause of superimposition as illustrated in the Sāṃkhya School. But there are differences in both the schools and they ran on parallel lines. Sāṃkhya is dualistic and pluralistic and Advaita is non-dualistic. For Advaitins, the womb of all creation is Brahman, the consciousness, and not *māyā*. In Brahman-consciousness there is no *māyā*. In the final analysis, there is no world, no *adhyāsa*. Daya Krishna's question as to how *adhyāsa* is possible is answered in the very concept of Advaita itself. *Adhyāsa* is because the world is. There are differences between Sāṃkhya *prakṛti* and Advaita *māyā*. In Sāṃkhya, *prakṛti* is real and in Advaita, *māyā* is illusion causing and indeterminable. With the dawn of knowledge, *prakṛti* remains as it is in Sāṃkhya, whereas, in Advaita, knowledge totally annihilates *māyā*. Very often scholars think that Sāṃkhya *prakṛti* is the same as the Advaita *māyā*. From the *Śvetāśvatara* statement quoted above, one may feel that both are identical concepts. There are radical differences between *māyā* as understood by Advaita and *prakṛti* as given by Sāṃkhya. *Prakṛti* is eternal, real and exists independently of *puṇḍra*. *Māyā* is not eternal (it is only *anādi*) *anirvacanīya* i.e., indeterminable as real or unreal and does not exist independent of Brahman.

However, there are philosophical similarities between the two and one such similarity is the concept of superimposition as Daya Krishna has pointed out in his essay. One important similarity is the causality of the creation. Sāṃkhya subscribes to *pariṇāma-vāda* according to which the effect pre-exists in the cause that gets modified in to the effect. This is acceptable to Śaṅkara who is of the view that cause and effect are modifications but modification is not real as Sāṃkhya subscribes, but illusory modification (*vivarta*). Keeping this in view, Saravajñātman, in his *Saṃkṣepaśārīrakam* states that “the pre-ground of *vivartavāda* is *pariṇāma-vāda* and when the theory of transmigration is presented, the theory of trans-figuration automatically follows” (2.61). Śaṅkara who is very critical about the Sāṃkhya School accepts Kapila to be a great thinker and his position as that of a *pradhāna-malla* (the foremost one). However with similarities, we cannot ignore the differences which is what Daya Krishna seems to have done. Let me take up his arguments and examine here below.

### My Submission and Rejoinder

To me, Daya Krishna seems to have simply misconstrued and therefore misunderstood the very concept of *adhyāsa* in Śaṅkara. Daya Krishna wants to prove that Śaṅkara's *adhyāsa* is borrowed from the Sāṃkhya school and the idea is not originally that of Śaṅkara and hence has a 'non-Advaitic beginning'.

1. *Adhyāsa* is a purely philosophical concept that has been there all along in the Indian philosophical scenario. Using this concept differently does not make this concept fundamentally different in each case. Any case where something else is mistaken for something, there is application of this concept of *adhyāsa*. Different

models of *adhyāsa* like rope-snake, *puruṣa-prakṛti*, *jīva-ātman* do not produce different type of *adhyāsa*. In rope-snake, a rope may be mistaken for a snake and in another the *ātman* may be mistaken for the body and in some other case, properties of *prakṛti* may be mistaken for the properties of *puruṣa*. The objects involved in these three instances of *adhyāsa* differ from one another, they may also differ in type – rope is one ‘type’ of object and the *puruṣa* of another ‘type’ – but nevertheless they all remain instances of (basic) *adhyāsa*. That is, they are all cases where something which is *not-x* (*ata*) is mistaken for *x* (*ta*). These are simply ‘three instances’ of *adhyāsa* and not ‘three types’ of *adhyāsa*.

2. Śaṅkara’s definition that *adhyāsa* is always and everywhere a case of mistaking something for what it really is not; this can be applied everywhere and completely rules out different types of *adhyāsa* like Sāṃkhyan *adhyāsa*. There is a basic flaw in the thinking of Daya Krishna who thinks that there are different types of *adhyāsa*. If someone insists on viewing a rope for a snake as one variety of *adhyāsa* and mistaking the *ātman* for the body as another variety of *adhyāsa* (call it *dehādhyāsa*), one will be forced to end up admitting infinite types of *adhyāsa* as there are individual instances of mistaking one thing for another. Daya Krishna seems to have failed to see the commonality between them and the basic mistake is to think that if the objects involved in *adhyāsa* are of different types, the concerned *adhyāsas* also necessarily fall into different types.

3. The distinction made by Daya Krishna between Sāṃkhyan *adhyāsa* and Advaitic *adhyāsa* is therefore philosophically unsound. His formulation of Advaitic *adhyāsa* is of course unappealing in its consequences. It is because he has identified type-token distinction when he says that *adhyāsa* “is not one but many...” and concludes that “what is superimposed on what, is the real source of differences among the different *adhyāsas*” (243). What he means is differences in the nature of the objects involved in *adhyāsa* make those *adhyāsas* themselves different in type from one another. Such a problem has arisen because of Daya Krishna’s relying on confusing translations of Śaṅkara’s original text that has prompted him to make logical deductions concerning what is Advaita *adhyāsa*.

4. Daya Krishna says: “The *adhyāsa* of the Sāṃkhya may be formulated, then, as “I am this,” where “I” refers to the pure subject, self or *puruṣa*, and “this” to Nature, object or *prakṛti*” (244). Then he goes on to argue that the formulation of *adhyāsa* of Advaita Vedānta “[W]ill be the exact opposite of this.... The *adhyāsa* of the Advaita Vedānta should thus be formulated as “I am not this,” where “I” refers to the self, subject or *ātman* and “this” to Nature, object or *Brahman*” (244). This is a very important point to discuss, but usually the *adhyāsa* goes with a positive assertion of a mistake like ‘This is a snake’ at a place where there is (no snake but) a rope and hence this is known as *adhyāropa* and when the illusion is sublated then it becomes ‘It is not a snake’ which is spoken of as *apavāda*. Given the position of Advaita, it is not possible to say ‘I am not Brahman’ since it will go

against the basic premise of identity which is asserted in the statements like 'I am Brahman' or '*aham brahmāsmi*'.

5. Taking clue from the above explanation, we cannot say 'I am not this' is a statement of *adhyāsa*. Like 'This is not a snake', the negative statement is a correcting statement. The statement of *adhyāsa* is 'I am this' wherein 'I' the pure-self is identified with all kind of objects, internal like mind, external like body. With this the self-illuminated (*svaprakāśa-ātman*) self becomes limited, finite and non-intelligent. This is *adhyāsa*. Now with *apavāda*, all these are negated. This is the implication of '*neti, neti*'. When this negation is carried to its logical and ontological limits, what is left is the ultimate subject, *ātman* which is identical with Brahman (Malkani 82). Hence Daya Krishna's claim that 'I am not this' is the basic form of error or *adhyāsa* is not acceptable. If Daya Krishna's view is to be accepted, then the correcting statement would be 'I am this' should be the statement implying correction, sublation (*apavāda*), which is not acceptable in Advaita Vedānta.

6. There is another confusion in Daya Krishna's views. The statement 'World is Brahman' is different from that of 'Atman is Brahman' and 'I am Brahman'. In Advaita, the first is a statement of instruction (*Upadeśa-vākya*) and second is a statement of realization (*anubhava-vākya*). The example for the first is 'a Rope-snake is a rope' which means that there is absence of snake in the rope. Similarly, when we say 'world is Brahman' it is to be understood as Brahman is that where there is absence of the world (*prapañca-abhāvanatvam*). The second statement is for the sake of realization where the essential form of 'I' is Brahman. Thus the identity of '*Brahman with the self*' is different from that of the '*world with the self*'. Daya Krishna fails to see this distinction and says,

[W]hat Śaṅkara describes as the root form of all ignorance is the identification of the subject with the object in any of its forms and at any of its levels. This is plain and unmitigated Sāṅkhya doctrine and even the wildest attempt at a reinterpretation cannot turn it into the Advaitic Vedānta. (245)

This according to Advaita is unacceptable.

7. Daya Krishna further says, "The identity of Ātman and Brahman, the subject and the object, is the ultimate and distinctive contention of the Advaita" (245). If we analyze his statement, we find it is perfectly acceptable to say Ātman is Brahman, but we cannot say the subject is the object. We can say this in a different way like the (pure) subject (Ātman) is that where there is total absence of object (*bādhayam sāmānādhikarāyam*). This is the way Śaṅkara accepts the identity of subject as object, but not as Daya Krishna claims which is gross misunderstanding of the basic tenets of Advaita Vedānta. This statement of Advaitic *adhyāsa*, as he claims to be "logically deduced" seems to be wrong and it goes against the very tradition of Advaita. The equation of 'this' with 'Nature, object or *Brahman*' makes no sense at

all because in Advaita, *Brahman* is neither 'Nature' (that is, *prakṛti* of Sāṃkhya) nor any kind of an 'object'. Besides, Advaita has always viewed *adhyāsa* as a totally positive, but wrong, identification of *anātman* with *ātman* and therefore such totally positive wrong identification can never be correctly expressed by any purely negative statement like 'I am *not* this'.

8. If, as Daya Krishna has maintained above, 'I' means the *Ātman* and 'this' means *Brahman*, 'I am not this' means '*Ātman* is not *Brahman*' which is an unacceptable statement as far as Advaita is concerned. What really figures in a very significant way in Advaita is the *non-difference* or identity between *Ātman* and *Brahman* and never any difference between them. This seems to be a gross misunderstanding on the part of Daya Krishna who comes up with a statement of non-identity and difference between them. The Upaniṣadic statement '*neti, neti*' is not a statement of *adhyāsa*, it only differentiates *Ātman* from *anātman*. It means, "[The *ātman* is] not this, not this" and the word "this" means *anātman* and never *Brahman*.

9. Now, I point out one more difficulty in accepting Daya Krishna's formulation of the statement of Sāṃkhya *adhyāsa* as 'I am this' and Advaitic *adhyāsa* as 'I am not this'. While Sāṃkhya *adhyāsa* goes well with this formulation, Advaita *adhyāsa* itself becomes just opposite of its basic standpoint. In Sāṃkhya, a statement of *adhyāsa* like 'I am the body' is indeed a statement of *adhyāsa* because the sentient *puruṣa* is *not* the body. Likewise, in Daya Krishna's formulation, the Advaitic statement of *adhyāsa* becomes "I am not the body". If we accept this to be true, then its rejection 'I am the body' must be true within Advaita. Hence his formulation of 'I am not the body' as not an instance of *adhyāsa*, it is just the opposite. The statement 'I am not the body' is an absolutely true statement not involving any *adhyāsa* in Advaita.

In short, when we consider the very nature of *adhyāsa* (superimposition) any statement involving *adhyāsa* must be false. Now, according to Daya Krishna, 'I am the body' is a statement of *adhyāsa* in Sāṃkhya and it is false because the *puruṣa* is not the body. In Advaita, his example i.e., 'I am not the body' should be a statement of *adhyāsa* and hence it must also be false. If that is the case, then the opposite 'I am the body' must be true in Advaita. The stand taken by Advaitin is just the opposite and hence Daya Krishna is wrong in taking such a stand.

10. Daya Krishna thinks that the two *adhyāsas* of Sāṃkhya and Advaita have to be 'the exact opposite' of each other. What it means is: if a statement expressing Sāṃkhya *adhyāsa* is false, then its exact opposite, a statement expressing Advaita *adhyāsa* must be true. However, it is well-known that a statement which expresses *adhyāsa* cannot be true. Hence a statement like 'I am the body' is a false statement according to both Advaita and Sāṃkhya systems.

11. It is only the Lokāyatas among all the schools of Indian Philosophy who would accept the sentence "I am not this body" to be a perfectly false one. For the

Advaitin, statements like 'I am not the body', 'I am not the senses', 'I am not the mind', 'I am not the elements' and in short, the *Mahāvākya*, *neti neti* – 'I am not this, I am not this' (where 'this' means anything regarded as 'not-*ātman*') are always true sentences and are *apavāda-vākyas* and hence they can never embody any *adhyāsa*. Such statements like *mano-buddhyabhaṅkāra-cittāni nāham* in the *Nirvāṇaṣaṭkam* of Śaṅkara are very famous examples in the tradition of Advaita having implication of denying possibility of presence of anything in the Brahman.

To conclude, the interpretation of Advaitic *adhyāsa* given by Daya Krishna is unacceptable because if his interpretation is accepted, then the very notions of truth and falsity get reversed within the system of Advaita. That is, every sentence regarded as true within Advaita system (like 'I am not the body') will have to be regarded as false, and every sentence regarded as false within Advaita (like 'I am the body') has to be regarded as true. In that case, Śaṅkara's Advaita will not simply have a 'non-Advaitic beginning' which is Sāṃkhyan as Daya Krishna has stated, but this explanation will have no trace of Advaita at all. While accepting Daya Krishna's ability to think differently, here he seems to have totally misconstrued the concept of *adhyāsa* and though the analysis appears to be scholarly, it is based on misunderstanding and wrong propositions.

This is one of the articles which shows Daya Krishna's ability to think differently. Being in the company of noted Advaitins of his time like G. R. Malkani and others with whom he was associated during his stay at the Indian Institute of Philosophy, Amalner, he must have developed a critical outlook towards Advaita which is reflected in this article. However, in his later writings on Advaita, we find his approach different from what is presented in this article. There is no doubt about the fact that there is similarity between Sāṃkhya and Advaita; but that should not make us draw a conclusion that Śaṅkara has borrowed the concept of *adhyāsa* from Sāṃkhya. This again is a result of *adhyāsa* (superimposition) which even deludes the scholars and which is echoed in the verse of Vidyāranya who is emphatic about the fact that even the wise encounter ignorance at some stage or other (*Pañcadaśī* 6.139). Daya Krishna is no exception.

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## *Yajña and the Doctrine of Karma*

Shraddha Pai

### **Abstract:**

Daya Krishna in his book *Indian Philosophy: A Counter Perspective*, points out how *yajña* and the doctrine of *Karma*, which are an important features of Indian thought, are essentially in conflict with each other. *Yajña* is an action done by a group of people (*rtvikas*) for *yajamāna*. The contradiction pointed out by Daya Krishna is that, as per the theory of *yajña*, one can reap the fruit of somebody else's action, while the theory of *Karma* denies any such possibility. Here it is necessary to know the difference between physical and moral causation which are not separate but intertwined with each other. The action is one, the person is one, and the effects are two which may not take place immediately after the action. First effect is due to physical causation in the physical world. Second is the result experienced by the person alone due to moral causation which again is in the form of some physical consequence experienced by the person in this life or future life. Some such effects are also said to be experienced in heaven or hell according to the doctrine of *Karma*. When this result (*karma phala*) due to moral causation is experienced by the person in this physical world, it appears as a physical effect due to physical causation and one cannot recognize it as an effect due to moral causation of the particular action done in past. All this complication is difficult to understand and leads to confusion. In my opinion contradiction stated by Daya Krishna is because of this confusion.

**Keywords:** *Yajña*, Doctrine of *Karma*, *Karma Phala*, Physical Causation, Natural Causation.



Daya Krishna in his book *Indian Philosophy: A Counter Perspective* has written a chapter titled, “*Yajña* and the Doctrine of *Karma* – A Contradiction in Indian Thought About Action”, in which he tried to show how *yajña*, which is considered to be the heart of the Vedas, and the doctrine of *Karma*, which is an important feature of Indian thought, are essentially in conflict with each other. Let us first understand Daya Krishna’s arguments and then one can evaluate them to decide whether such a contradiction really exists or is it a myth.

There are two main arguments put forward by Daya Krishna.

### **The First Argument**

Different types of *yajña* are mentioned in the Vedas that are to be undertaken for diverse purposes. One constant element in all of them as far as the doctrine of *Karma* is concerned, says Daya Krishna, is the relationship between *yajamāna* and *ṛtvika*. *Yajña* is performed for *yajamāna*, and *ṛtvikas* are those who actually perform it.

Daya Krishna in his article mentioned above enumerates the following important aspects of Vedic *yajña* that he considers to be important from the view point of the doctrine of *Karma*.

- 1) *Yajña* is an action done by a group of people for someone else who hires them for performing it by giving prescribed fees.
- 2) It is a collective action which can only be undertaken jointly by each person performing the part assigned to him in the total activity.
- 3) The action though performed by many is still supposed to be one action.
- 4) The action, though done by many persons, is not regarded as their action, either singly or jointly, in the sense that the fruit of this action does not accrue to them.
- 5) The fruit of the action accrues not to those who actually perform it, but to the one who has paid them to perform it.
- 6) The action is always undertaken for the achievement of a desired end i.e. it is a *sakāma karma*.

The contradiction pointed out by Daya Krishna is that, as per the theory of *yajña*, one can reap the fruit of somebody else’s action, while the essence of the theory of *Karma* denies the very possibility of such a situation ever arising in a universe that is essentially moral in nature.

### **The Second Argument**

It is a fact that human beings mutually affect one another in substantial ways, and they are supposed to be responsible for their actions. Apart from giving a coherent description of the relevant facts regarding human action, the

task of the theory of *Karma*, says Daya Krishna, has another inbuilt demand to render ‘moral intelligibility’ which may be acceptable to the moral conscience of man. The theory of *Karma* as accepted in the Indian tradition therefore has to be seen as an attempt to render human actions intelligible in moral terms and not as a description of facts regarding human actions.

The solution to the problem of moral intelligibility of human actions in the Indian tradition takes a distinctive turn according to Daya Krishna. He says from the self-evident intuitive proposition – ‘the world will not be morally intelligible if I were to reap fruit of someone else’s action or if someone else were to reap the fruit of my action’ – the theory draws the conclusion that in order for the world to be morally intelligible, we must live in a ‘morally monadic’ world. That means, nobody can be the cause of my suffering or happiness nor can I be the cause of suffering or happiness of anybody else. However, Daya Krishna says, one cannot conceive of morality in a monadic universe. Morality implies an ‘other centric’ consciousness where one can care for the other because one can affect the wellbeing of another. Once the ontological possibility of this is denied, morality in the usual sense becomes impossible. Such a theory leads to self-centric perspective of an action, where action is primarily conceived and judged in terms of not what it does to others but what it does to doer. This may seem perverse to many people, particularly to those who treat the socio-political nature of man as his essential defining characteristics.

The notion of action itself, says Daya Krishna, necessarily imply some ‘other’ which has to be changed by my action. This other can be a physical situation too. If action implies a psycho-physical world of causality, then how can the demands of ‘moral intelligibility’ of the universe as interpreted and understood in the theory of *Karma*, be fulfilled? This is the basic question in light of which theory of *Karma* needs to be articulated and understood.

### **Considering a few Fundamentals**

To critically evaluate these arguments it is necessary to understand certain things, like – a) What is moral judgment? b) What is the object of moral judgment? c) The difference between natural causation i.e., causation in physical world and moral causation. d) The relation between the two types of causation.

Moral judgment is a judgment of value and not a judgment of fact. In a judgment of fact one makes statements about facts which may be true or false e.g. ‘This is a round table’. A judgment of value is a judgment of what ought to be e.g. ‘one should not hurt or harm others’. The moral judgment is not like a logical judgment like saying that certain argument is valid. It is not merely a judgment about, but a judgment upon an action with reference to moral ideal.

How do we judge an action as morally right or wrong? First of all, it is only a voluntary action performed by a free rational agent deliberately and

intentionally to realize some foreseen end that is to be evaluated morally. So the action which is an object of moral judgment presupposes free will on part of the agent. As the free human agent has freedom of will and by using his reason and discriminative power he can decide the course of action, and choose the means for performing the action keeping in mind the consequences thereof, such an action can only be morally judged as right or wrong. A voluntary action, again, consists of three stages: 1) The mental stage of spring of action, motive, intention, desire, deliberation, choice and resolution. 2) The organic stage of bodily action. 3) The external stage of consequences. The first stage is an internal aspect of an action. The third stage is an external factor of an action. There is a controversy among thinkers – whether the rightness or wrongness of an action depends upon internal factors like motive, intention, will of a person or on the external factors i.e., consequences of an actions. For the consequentialists the rightness or wrongness of an action depends upon its consequences – the resultant happiness and wellbeing, the motive of an action has nothing to do with the moral worth of the action. Rationalist and Intuitionist on the other hand, hold that it is not the effect of our actions, rather the unconditional will while performing the same gives them moral worth.

What, then, is the object of moral judgment – the motive or the consequences of a voluntary act? As stated by J. Sinha:

[M]otive and consequences are not opposed to each other. The motive is the inner consequence as foreseen and desire. The consequence is the outer manifestation of the inner motive. The motive or the idea of the end aimed at is undoubtedly the object of moral judgments. The consequence also is the object of moral judgment in so far as it realizes the inner motive. (58)

To consider a couple of examples: i) Sometimes it is found that the motive is good but the consequence turns out to be bad. For example: an experienced surgeon performs an operation with utmost care to save the patient but in spite of his efforts the patient dies. In this case the motive is good but consequence is bad. However the action of the surgeon cannot be judged as bad or wrong. ii) Sometimes the motive is bad but the consequence turns out to be good for instance, if I throw a coin to a beggar with intension to hurt him and he picks it up and buys food with it, the physical effect is good but with respect to me the action is very wrong. So morally this act is wrong because of the wrong motive though the effect is good.

It is clear from the above two examples that the object of a moral judgment in these cases is the motive irrespective of the physical effect of the action. However one needs to consider even the means employed by the person for the attainment of the end. The intention of the action includes both the idea of the end and the means chosen by the person. Intention is wider than the motive. If the motive i.e. the end chosen is good but the means adopted for

realizing an end are bad then such an action cannot be considered as good. For example, a person robs a bank and uses that money to help poor and needy people. Though the motive is good the action cannot be considered as good because the means used are wrong. Thus, it is the intention of an action which is to be regarded as the proper object of moral judgment which includes a motive i.e. an idea of the end as well as an idea of the means. An action is good if its intention is good – the end and the means both must be good in order to make an action right.

When an action of a person is morally judged as good/bad and right/wrong, we are not just passing a judgment like a factual judgment but we hold him responsible for his action. The person is either praised or blamed for the action. He is therefore either worthy of a reward or liable to punishment in this physical world as per the laws of state. A person is punished for his wrong deeds as per the laws of the state only if he is noticed and caught doing a wrong action and is also proved to be guilty for the same. Again all wrong/bad actions do not come under the purview of law and so are not punishable. Similarly all good/right actions of a person are also not rewarded by the society. However we are morally responsible for all our voluntary actions. In order to make all our moral actions intelligible, there is a need to distinguish between causation in physical world and moral causation. Hence the Indian tradition and also many religions state that, one also accrues merit (*punya*) or demerit (*pāpa*) for one's good/bad and right/wrong actions which lead to some pleasant or unpleasant results experienced by the person in this or future life. This merit and demerit also qualifies him for the heaven (*Svarga*) or hell (*Naraka*) after this life.

Involuntary actions of humans, actions of animals and the natural phenomena which are not judged morally, lead to effects in physical world only. The question of moral causation does not arise here. These effects however are also experienced by us. With reference to voluntary actions of human beings which are judged morally one needs to distinguish between two types of effects – (1) the effect of an action in the physical world. This effect in turn may lead to result in form of reward or punishment for example, person 'A' kills person 'B'. Killing 'B' is an action performed by 'A'. Death of 'B' is an effect as per physical causation which in turn leads to punishment given to 'A'. Punishment is the result of the action performed by 'A' (2) the effect in the form of merits or demerit accrued by a person. These further result in some pleasant or unpleasant experiences in this life or in the life after death or in future life. For instance, in the above example, killing 'B' is an action performed by 'A'. Demerit accrued by 'A' is an effect due to moral causation. Some negative unpleasant situation faced by 'A' is the result experienced by 'A' of the action. One can say that, the result is the final consequence i.e. the *karma phala* or fruit of action experienced by a person performing the action.

The physical effect of an action performed by a person in natural or physical causation may lead to 1) some pleasant or unpleasant experience in case of other people including the person himself. 2) Some changes in the environment, which in turn may be favorable or unfavorable for others including the person and for the society or nature in general. The effect due to moral causation however is experienced only by the person i.e. the doer of the action. Depending on the intention of the action the moral effect i.e. merit or demerit is accrued in the person's account. In the form of merit/demerit it is potential *karma phala* or result of an action and when fructified in due course of time it is experienced by the person.

These two types of causation are not separate they are intertwined with each other. The action is one, the person is one, and the effects are two which may or may not take place immediately after the action. First effect is due to physical causation in the physical world. Second is the result experienced by the person alone due to moral causation which again is in the form of some physical consequence or situation experienced by the person in this life or future life. Some such effects are also said to be experienced in heaven or hell according to the doctrine of *Karma*. When this result (*karma phala*) due to moral causation is experienced by the person in this physical world, it appears as a physical effect due to physical causation and one cannot recognize it as an effect due to moral causation of the particular action done in past. All this complication is difficult to understand and leads to confusion. In my opinion contradiction stated by Daya Krishna is because of this confusion.

### **Critical Evaluation of the Arguments**

1. As all voluntary actions of humans lead to some effects in the world, these effects in case of other human beings can be either pleasant or unpleasant. So in terms of this physical or natural causation, action of one person does affect another person. This is obvious and is not denied by the doctrine of *Karma* in Indian philosophy. What the hard core of the theory of *Karma* denies is, one cannot reap the fruit, i.e. *karma phala*, of somebody else's action. Here the theory is referring to the moral causation. As far as the moral causation is concerned, the doer alone is morally responsible for his action and he alone has to reap fruit of his action. What the fruit of action will be depends upon the intention of the action. When an action is done with good intention, e.g., when a doctor treats poor people without charging his fees and by giving free medicine, definitely he brings about a good change in the society as more and more people will benefit from his act who otherwise would have suffered. This is an effect due to causation in physical world. As the intention is good, merit will be accrued in doctor's account which will lead to fruit/result of the action experienced by the doctor alone. This fruit of action is due to moral causation. The fruit of an

action done with good intention for the welfare of the society or to help others is always good.

This shows that Daya Krishna's second argument that the doctrine of *Karma* leads to 'moral monadism' which makes moral life impossible in principle is incorrect. The theory does not lead to self-centric perspective of an action, as pointed out by Daya Krishna where action is primarily conceived and judged in terms of not what it does to others but what it does to me.

Importance given to the *Dharma* among the four values in the theory of *puruṣārtha* also shows that doctrine of *Karma* does not imply self-centric perspective of an action and moral monadism. *Kāma* i.e. desire is conceived as *puruṣārtha*/value only when pursued as per *Dharma* which is the regulatory principle. Śrī Kṛṣṇa declares in *Bhagavadgītā* – “*Dharmavirudho Bhūteṣu Kāmosmi Bharatarṣabha*” (7.11), which means there is Divinity in *Kāma* provided it is not opposed to moral values and is compatible with them. Like *Kāma*, *Artha* also is to be pursued according to *dharma*.

The *Bhagavadgītā* also proclaims that the secret of human life is to recognize and follow the path of *Dharma*, which means engaging yourself in selfless and sacred actions that promote the welfare of your fellow human beings. The *Gītā* declares that human life lies in action; therefore whether an ordinary human being or a spiritual aspirant, one should engage in activity/*karma*. However the actions which they perform must be sacred actions, they must conform to the principle of *Dharma*.

Vedic ethics and axiology are rooted in the concept of *Ṛta* which originally stands for both natural and moral order. Later on it was extended to include social and sacrificial order. But fundamentally *Ṛta* signifies cosmic order whose control and direction is in righteous hands. The doctrine of *Karma* and the concept of *dharma* can be traced to the doctrine of *Ṛta*. Vedic *Ṛta* inspires and invigorates man to live the life of higher values. Even nature is conducive to the attainment of values. The world is, so to say, a valley of soul-making. It includes goodness and justice. It is sternly opposed to evil. *Ṛta* is the basis of the Upaniṣadic statement – “*Satyamevajayatenāṇṛtam*” (*Mundaka Upaniṣad* 3.1.6), i.e., eventually it is the truth that prevails and not untruth. The doctrine of *Karma* is the direct corollary of the belief in *Ṛta*.

2. The contradiction pointed out by Daya Krishna in the first argument is that, “as per the hard core of the theory of *yajña*, one can reap the fruit of somebody else's action, while the hard core of the theory of *Karma* denies the very possibility of such a situation ever arising in a universe that is essentially moral in nature” (175). Let us see whether there is such a contradiction between *yajña* and the doctrine of *Karma*.

Various types of *yajña* are mentioned in Vedas. *Yajña* is a ritual/procedure performed by a group of people in order to bring about some desired end. For example, *yajña* performed for son, wealth, prosperity, good

crop, good rains etc. One may argue whether such rituals can lead to such effects. However that is not the issue at discussion. *Yajña*, being a group action, when the desired end for which it is done occurs for instance, good crop then it is the effect of *yajña* occurred due to natural/physical causation. Depending upon the purpose of *yajña* this effect will be experienced by only the *yajamāna* or by everyone in the society including those involved in performing *yajña*. For example if a king performs *yajña* for son then the effect of getting son is experienced by him. The people in the kingdom get prince. The *ṛtvika* who performs *yajña* for the king get their fees. If *yajña* is performed by the king for prosperity of his kingdom then the whole kingdom enjoys the effect. These effects are due to natural causation so they may lead to pleasant/unpleasant experiences for others. This does not imply that one can reap fruit of somebody else's action. Only in case of moral causation it is said one reaps fruit of only one's own action.

Action of the king performing *yajña* as a *yajamāna* and action of the *ṛtvika* performing *yajña* for the king, being voluntary action, they all are responsible for their own actions and according to each one's intention behind their action; merit/demerit will be accrued in their account and accordingly they will experience fruit of their action in future. The king as a *yajamāna*, for instance, performing *yajña* for prosperity of everyone in his kingdom will reap fruit of his action accordingly as it is done with the sole intention of welfare of people. Intentions of a *ṛtvika* can be different e.g., someone doing only his duty, someone just following the order as he is scared of punishment, someone as concerned as the king about welfare of people or someone performing *yajña* to spoil the whole show as he is against the welfare of people for some reason. According to their intention each one will enjoy/suffer fruit or *karma phala* of his action. King being the initiator, the one who decides to perform the *yajña* for the benefit of people, the one who arranges everything, bears all expenses, is naturally the main person responsible for the action and will accrue merit accordingly.

As per the laws of state also, for a collective action the leader of the action, the brain behind the act is mainly held responsible for the action and is praised or blamed for the same. The people who actually do the action are not equally held responsible. Let us take another example – a builder constructing a building. Like *yajña* this is also a collective action which can only be undertaken jointly by each person performing the part assigned to him in the total activity. Like *yajamāna* of the *yajña*, the builder also constructs the building by employing many people who actually do the job for him of constructing the building. The people who do the work are paid according to their work. After the construction is over the effect of the collective action is the building which is constructed. Now who deserves the profit or who bears the loss if any? If the building turns out to be very beautiful, then who will be praised and who will

get name and fame? Or if the building gets cracked very soon due to faulty construction then who will be held responsible and be blamed and punished? Of course the builder; and not the people who actually constructed the building. In this case do we say this is not justified, or do we say that somebody else is praised/blamed for someone else's action?

What applies in case of norms or laws of society is applicable in case of moral causation too. It is not the outer action but the intention of the action by which an action is judged and accordingly the person reaps the fruit of his action. For instance, let us consider two cases – 1) a doctor performing operation by tearing the stomach of the patient with a knife in order to save his life. But in spite of his best efforts the patient dies. 2) A person's stomach is torn with a knife in order to kill him by somebody and the person dies. Both the actions outwardly appear the same, i.e., a person's stomach is torn with a knife, but the intentions are different so accordingly the actions will be judged as good or bad and accordingly they will reap the fruits of their action as per the moral causation. As per the law the murderer will be punished whereas the doctor will not be considered guilty. Daya Krishna is therefore wrong when he says there is contradiction between *yajña* and the doctrine of *Karma* in Indian Philosophy. He is wrong when he says that as per the theory of *Yajña* one can reap fruit of somebody else's action. The concept of *niṣkāma karma* as explained in *Gītā* also supports this.

*Yajña* is *sakāma karma* – it is performed in order to bring about certain desired end. Feeling of pain and pleasure is considered as springs of action according to moral philosophers. Everybody wants to be happy and avoid pain and suffering. The desire to be happy or to seek pleasure is the basic instinct, a common factor, behind all our actions. *Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad* states the same “*Kāmaṁ yoyam hi puruṣaḥ*”, which means man is truly a bundle of desires which move him from within to do different actions and seek certain objects (qtd. in Nigal 41). Satisfaction of every desire leads to happiness.

All actions performed by men are for the sake of a reward or fruit of the action. If there were no fruits resulting from their actions, human beings would not undertake any work at all. Every action has a consequence i.e., result or fruit of action. Subsequently, the fruit gives rise to another action. This ongoing cycle of action and fruit, fruit and action is similar to the cycle of seed and tree. Seed gives rise to the tree and the tree gives rise to seed. Man cannot abstain from doing action. We have no choice but to act. It is therefore necessary that we perform all our actions in a proper way.

Any action performed with the feeling of ego, the sense that ‘I’ did it, or with the sense of attachment, that it is ‘my’ act, all such actions, says Śrī Kṛṣṇa in *Gītā*, will bring only sorrow. Such acts result in further bondage. Numerous troubles arise when one acts with a feeling of egoism. Inwardly you might feel this action was performed by me; so I should derive benefits from it. I worked,



so I deserve to get paid. I am certainly entitled to the rewards accruing from the actions I performed. Such feelings serve only to strengthen the sense of ego and result in further bondage.

To say that, when an action is done with sense of ego or attachment by keeping in mind the result/fruit of action leads to bondage, is to say that one is responsible for such acts and therefore has to reap the fruit of it. Our desire to seek pleasure and the intention behind the action i.e. idea of the end or consequences and the means adopted bind us. So we reap fruit/*karma phala* of our own action. My desires and intentions can only bind me and not others.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa told Arjuna repeatedly that do your duty. Engage yourself in rightful action. But do not aspire for the fruit of your action (*Bhagavadgītā* 2.47). Kṛṣṇa did not say there would be no fruit. The fruit will certainly be there, but fruit is not your concern, give up all interest in the fruit of your *karma*. One may say what if we desist from *karma*? Kṛṣṇa says, this is not possible, not even for a single moment one can free oneself from *karma* (*Bhagavadgītā* 3.5). Kṛṣṇa says, every *karma* has a beginning and end. Desire the fruit of *karma* and caught up in that desire you get born again and again. Give up the desire for fruit of *karma* and you are liberated from the flux. Practice of such type of *niṣkāma karma* liberates us from the bondage.

When man has a right for engaging in *karma*, he has a right also for the fruit, no one can deny this or refuse his right. But the doer can out of his free will and determination refuse to be affected by the result, whether good or bad. The desire for the result of our action is *rajo-guṇa*. Giving up action since I cannot benefit by the fruit of action is *tamo-guṇa*. To engage oneself in *karma* knowing that the result will follow, and yet not to be attached to it is the sign of *satva-guṇa*.

A person will not be able to reach the stage of *niṣkāma karma* as long as desires which have arisen from past actions are not exhausted. One must, therefore, remove the bad qualities which are associated with bad actions by replacing them with good qualities which are associated with good actions. When one is firmly established in the stage of selfless service wherein one performs only good actions one can go to the stage of *niṣkāma karma*, where one can renounce fruit of all actions. From this stage one can naturally rise to the stage of *anāsakti karma*.

Compared to ordinary actions which are done thinking of oneself as a doer, the actions done without desire for the fruit, that is *niṣkāma karma*, are much greater. *Anāsakti karma*, i.e., action with complete desirelessness, performed impersonally with total indifference and without any attachment is even greater than *niṣkāma karma*. However when the action is offered completely to God it becomes sacrifice or *yajña* in true sense. It is different from the *yajña* performed with a view to achieve some end. Such an action is the most sacred one. Thus Kṛṣṇa commanded Arjuna to offer all his acts to God

(*Bhagavadgītā* 3.30). When actions thus become *yajña* one attains liberation/*Mokṣa*. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* also states that – it is very difficult path like razor’s edge (3.14). The way to achieve this goal (*mokṣa*) is most difficult and requires the aspirant to give up egotism, selfishness and worldly attachment.

The above explanation shows that both the objections raised by Daya Krishna that 1) there is contradiction between the theory of *Yajña* and the Doctrine of *Karma*, and 2) the doctrine of *Karma* leads to ‘moral monadism’ which makes moral life impossible, in principle are incorrect. His concluding remarks in the chapter that, “*Yajña*, *Karma*, and *Mokṣa* provide the three major themes around which Indian thinking about human life seems to revolve. They pull it in opposite directions, as there is not only a tension but also inherent conflict between them” (186) are also not correct, rather if understood properly there is perfect consistency among the three concepts.

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## Analyzing the Dimensions of *Bhakti*

Meenal Katarnikar

### **Abstract:**

The *Bhagavad-Gītā*, one among the three *Prasthānas* of the Vedic tradition, authenticates *bhakti*, i.e. devotion as one of the paths of liberation. It is an important move in the spiritual context as the other two *prasthānas*, viz. *Brahmasūtras*, and the *Upaniṣads* are inclined towards knowledge as the sole path of self-realization. The role of *bhakti* was far widened by *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*, the fourth *Prasthāna* accepted by the theistic *Vedāntins*. In this text, *bhakti* was treated, not as a path of liberation, but as the goal in itself. This mistiness about the nature of *bhakti* and its precise role in the spiritual life of a human person is reflected in the literature about *bhakti* which is available in ample quantity. Daya Krishna, in his article “Did the Gopīs Really Love Kṛṣṇa?” raises some very significant and interesting questions about *bhakti*. The invariable relation between love and devotion and the investigation into their nature forms the main thesis of the article. On the background of this discussion, the paper ventures into the analysis of the very concept of ‘*bhakti*’ by expounding various paradigms that are found in Indian tradition. It also presents small narratives of the spiritual persons from Maharashtra belonging to different periods.

**Keywords:** *Bhakti*, Daya Krishna, *Bhagavad-Gītā*, Sant Gulabrao Maharaj, Sant Jñāneśwara.

### Preamble

Is *bhakti*, i.e. devotion, a path towards liberation (lit. *Mokṣa*, the highest among the *Puruṣārthas* described in Indian tradition) or is it itself a *Puruṣārtha*? This question emerges on the background of diverse interpretations of the term '*bhakti*' found in Indian tradition from classical to contemporary period. The above-mentioned are the two poles between which several elucidations and readings of the concept '*bhakti*' can be situated. Apparently *bhakti* is a religio-soteriological concept and doesn't seem to have attracted the attention of systematic philosophy despite its pervasive impact on the social psyche. Of course, there is a notable exception to this in *Bhagavad-Gītā*, one of the Hindu scriptures, wherein the notion of '*bhakti*' is treated on par with other pathways to liberation. But this is an exception and the general tendency is to keep the notion of *bhakti* secluded from academic, rational discourse. The nature of *bhakti* being more personal and having more weightage as a first-person phenomenon rather than as a public event,<sup>1</sup> strong reasons and justification can be provided to keep it as a private matter and not to make it accessible to any open, objective analysis. If such conceptual analysis is coupled with some kind of historical analysis, one may face some other set of challenges in understanding '*bhakti*'. For example,

The complete overshadowing of the Kṛṣṇa of *Mahābhārata* with that of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* and the *Gīta Govinda* is a phenomenon that has not received sufficient attention by the students of bhakti tradition in India. What exactly was that element in the later texts which increasingly appealed more and more to those who wanted to pursue the feeling-centered path of devotion in Indian tradition? Did the personality of Kṛṣṇa as depicted in *Mahābhārata* have elements which were incompatible with the development of an intensely emotional, and even passionate relationship to him in the usual sense of these words?

These are questions that need to be discussed and explored in detail if one wants to understand the ideal of *bhakti* as a *puruṣārtha* in the tradition. (*New Perspectives* 178)

In his *New Perspectives in Indian Philosophy*, Daya Krishna has written an article titled "Did the Gopīs Really Love Kṛṣṇa?" In this article, he raises some important questions related to the concept of devotion, i.e. *bhakti*, which is of more religio-spiritual interest rather than a philosophical analysis. The analysis is done by him mainly with reference to three texts, viz. *Bhagavad-Gītā*, *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* and *Gīta Govindam*.

Incidentally, except the first among three, the other two are referred in Indian society, not with enough logical vigour but more with devotion. Moreover, the last one is accommodated, not in the category of

philosophical text but in the group of literary works. However, the questions raised by Daya Krishna are fundamental to any philosophical quest of 'bhakti', and categorically analyze two important trends in the phenomenon of 'bhakti' – one, 'bhakti' as a path to liberation, two, 'bhakti' as a final goal, *puruṣārtha*.

This thread continues in his other article titled "*Bhakti, the New Puruṣārtha: The Tidal Wave from the South*" wherein he writes,

The Indian *bhakti* tradition never conceived of God as the beloved, as it was done in the Sufi tradition of West Asia nor was the transcendent reality ever conceived of as a servant in relation to man or the devotee who then will have to be seen as the master, even though there are some stories to suggest that the Lord literally takes the burden of caring and preserving the welfare of those who love Him. (*New Approach* 150)

Daya Krishna, no doubt, is trying to understand the facets of the relationship between the devotee and the Lord through this analysis, though some of his observations might be put to question. For instance, there is a popular sect in Maharashtra, one of the Indian states, that was initiated by Sant Gulabrao Maharaj, which regarded God as the beloved, rather husband. Sant Gulabrao Maharaj<sup>2</sup> considered himself as the 'daughter' of Sant Jñāneśwara (the spiritual Maestro and the founder of *Bhāgavata* alias *Vārakari* tradition in 13th C.E. from Maharashtra,) and tied a knot of wedding with the God and entered a relationship of husband-wife throughout his life. It is possible to locate some such examples in the interior parts of pan-India. The great narrative of the unique love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa is another example of considering God as the beloved. And a great part of *bhakti*-literature is occupied by this story, including *Gīta Govindam* cited by Daya Krishna. In the same manner, it is not a matter of merely 'some stories' as mentioned by Daya Krishna that God served His devotees. The account of the most influential *bhakti*-cult in Maharashtra, viz. *Bhāgavata* tradition, which began in 13th C.E. with the first Marathi commentary on *Bhagavad-Gītā* at the hands of Sant Jñāneśwara and is a living tradition till date, is flooded with the stories narrating the showering of grace of God who appears in the form of servant or helper of the devotees. Dr. R. D. Ranade has done a highly structured and erudite research and documentation of this tradition. It would not be an exaggerated claim that no study of bhakti tradition in India would be complete without referring to the works of Dr. Ranade.<sup>3</sup>

This points to the fact of 'bhakti' having innumerable facets and the need to explore as many of them as possible in order to understand the concept. It would be interesting to investigate how the relation between a devotee and God is conceived in various *bhakti* cults in India. God as mother, as beloved, as Master, as companion, as husband are some notable

relations which are widely discussed in Indian *bhakti* literature. The need is to examine whether any other relation is conceived, and if yes, what kind of. It will be illuminating to scrutinize whether articulation of the God-devotee relation varies according to the articulation of *bhakti* as either a pathway or a final goal, i.e. *puruṣārtha*.

The sum and substance of the above discussion is – it is necessary to bring the notion of *bhakti* into the grasp of rational-logical analysis and also to problematize and philosophize it in order to understand its various dimensions.

## I

*Bhakti* is commonly translated as devotion and *Bhaktiyoga* as the path of devotion chosen by a devotee towards God-realization. In Indian tradition, massive literature, and that too of variegated types, is available on '*Bhakti*'. The main types of such literature can be delineated as the '*Bhakti-sūtras*' written by various authors, Nārada, Śāṇḍilya to name a few and a vast body of saint-poetry available from medieval period. In these works, *Bhakti* is expressed in various ways. The one which is very comprehensive and exploring the very fundamental aspects of *bhakti* is the description given by Nārada in his *Bhakti-sūtras*. In this masterly work, *bhakti* is described as the highest form of love for God, surrender of all actions to Him, and agony upon separation from Him. By the advocates of *Bhakti*, this path is regarded as superior to the other paths on account of two things – one, it is full of simplicity and does not demand any indispensable qualities on the part of its followers; two, it is accessible to anyone in the world without any conditions.

One of the important texts that authenticate the path of *Bhakti* as instrumental for liberation is *Bhagavad-Gītā*. The declaration of *Gītā* about the four paths of liberation and including in that the most sublime emotion, viz. *bhakti*, was a significant step in lifting the status of *bhakti* from the psychological realm to spiritual realm. Following are some examples that expound various dimensions of the notion of '*Bhakti*' as expressed in *Bhagavad-Gītā*:

Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer as  
oblation to the sacred fire, whatever you give and whatever  
austerities you perform, filled with devotion offer sincerely to  
me. (9.27)

Even the worst of sinners can become absolved of their sins  
through devotion to God. (9.30)

Even those who cannot read or understand the scriptures can always engage themselves in *bhakti*.

Of all *yogis*, those whose minds are always absorbed in me and who engage in devotion to me with great faith, I consider them to be highest of all. (6.47)

The supreme Divine personality is greater than all that exists. Although He is all-pervading, and all living beings are established in Him, yet he can be known only through devotion. (8.22)

It is only through devotion that one can come to know of God's personality and omniscience which further leads to full-fledged God-conscience. (18.55)

These shades of the emotion of *bhakti* show that it is firmly rooted in faith and unflinching passion. External forms of *bhakti* become meaningful only when accompanied by that faith and fervour. As the love of God intensifies, the attachment towards worldly objects gradually diminishes. One of the highest forms of *bhakti* is total surrender to god. "Surrender unto me. I shall liberate you from all sins. Do not grieve" (*Bhagavad-Gītā* 18.66).

## II

This is not to assume that this is the only import of '*bhakti*' or that these are the exclusive expressions of *bhakti* in *Bhagavad-Gītā*. In other chapters of the text as well, concept of *bhakti* is expounded. And another equally important text, *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*, which is the fourth scripture of the theistic traditions in India, expounds the notion of '*bhakti*' in its own style. It doesn't interpret *bhakti*, unlike *Bhagavad-Gītā*, as necessarily a path of God-realization but it expounds it as an end in itself. The Divinity appears in the concrete form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and that too in his child and youth form.

As depicted in *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*, the *Gopīs* constitute the archetype of practicing *bhakti* as the goal of life and Rādhā sets the norm of excellence. *Bhāgavata* gives us a beautiful picture of a candid love between the *Gopīs* and Kṛṣṇa. It also establishes the 'love-story' of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa which is itself a unique paradigm of Love.

A lot of descriptions can be quoted from *Bhāgavata* to show its difference from *Bhagavad-Gītā* regarding the nature of '*Bhakti*'. However, it would be helpful to discuss this notion in the light of very fundamental questions raised by Daya Krishna, in his article titled "Did the *Gopīs* Really Love Kṛṣṇa?". According to him, the complete overshadowing of the Śrī Kṛṣṇa of the *Mahābhārata* who is a diplomat, savior and the Supreme Personality, by that of *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* and the *Gīta Govindam* who is the greatest lover is a phenomenon that has not received sufficient attention by the students of *bhakti* tradition in India. This is certainly a point to be considered in order to understand the ideal of *bhakti* as a *Puruṣārtha*.



Daya Krishna brings out some enigmatic situations about the relation between *Gopīs* and Kṛṣṇa that puzzle him. For example (*New Perspectives* 175-6), Love of *Gopīs* for Kṛṣṇa is intimate in his presence as well as absence. They don't seem to be much concerned whether Kṛṣṇa is present there with them or not. Not only this, *Gopīs* don't make even the slightest attempt to seek him out and meet him once more after he leaves *Vṛndāvan*; they do not even try to find where he is or how he is. They have immeasurable love for Kṛṣṇa in his absence also. But can this be said about Kṛṣṇa's love for *Gopīs*? Kṛṣṇa hardly remembers them once He left *Vṛndāvan*.

Here, *Gopīs*' love, devotion for Kṛṣṇa is not directed to any telos. They are happy in having related to their '*Sakhā*' (i.e. friend). And the logic or emotional bond that they have is only from their side. None of these is applicable to the Lord or His love.

Moreover, it may not be incorrect to ask whether the puzzles faced by Daya Krishna are really genuine or not. It is so because the feeling of Love is above logic and does not really get caught in the business of 'gain and loss'. That is to say, the love of the type that *Gopīs* have for Kṛṣṇa is 'unconditional love'; it doesn't expect anything in its return, not even love of Kṛṣṇa. It is not the subject matter of 'I-Thou' binary and so is beyond this-worldly logic which is prominently that of binaries. Thus, my love is neither my gain nor my loss, it is just love.

In this regard, it will be illuminating to know something fundamental about '*bhakti*' as a form of love.

[W]hen we are incensed with love, we do not remain in this bodily frame, we go up and up. We transcend the case of the body. The energy of love and affinity bursts and comes out of the body. This body, which is pre-stamped for consignment at the very time of birth to Earth and Fire, loses its significance. With body, there is ego and when Ego appears, Lord says 'I go.' But with the spring of spontaneous Love, Ego disappears. 'I'ness dies. We do not require body for communication. When we are in the water of love, its current passes through water and touches us. We do not need telephones, we live on telepathy. We don't require body anymore for any sort of contact.

If you want to know of this love, you have to throw away your decorative bodily attributes and identity, just like a stock of jasmine flowers kept together. No flower can be named, every flower is a flower. Similarly, we are spirits, sentient beings though we occupy our bodily cases. Nobody can be identified. When your bodily awareness disappears, your love also becomes 'nameless'.... When you are bodiless, you automatically become unaware of the worldly happiness and likes and dislikes which

are a part of your body. And there the love starts. In fact that love had no dimensions at all. Hence, we cannot define love.

When name comes, 'I'ness comes, sense of belonging, pride enter. Then the seeds of dissension get sown slowly. At the very same time envy and malice gather together and obviously you invite enemies.... With the dissolving of name, everyone thinks that he is the president, or an architect and the player of the show. So, nobody is different from anybody, hence 'nameless'.... (Katarnikar and Katarnikar 23-24)

Thus, Love, rather unconditional love, which is simply another name of '*bhakti*', is a unique feeling; it is untouched by anything physical or this-worldly, but is expressed through body.

This can well explain the queries of Daya Krishna regarding the love of *Gopīs* towards Kṛṣṇa. *Gopīs*' minds are filled with immense love for Kṛṣṇa that has no reference of any physical context of His being. Whether he was bodily present or not was never the issue for them. Their minds had acquired the form of Kṛṣṇa. So, he was always with them.

### III

What can be the nature of this *bhakti*? Is it the means of God-realization? Or is it end in itself? But as *Gopīs* do not have any other end than the extreme love for Kṛṣṇa, the latter option seems to be acceptable.

This trend continues in the *bhakti* tradition in medieval India in the state of Maharashtra. The *Bhakti* cult which was initiated by Sant Jñāneśwara and then spread and strengthened by his fellow devotees is known to be a *Bhāganata* or *Vārakari* cult. Historically, this cult is regarded as the pioneer of path of devotion. However, if the lives of Saint Nāmdeo or Saint Tukārāma are examined, there seems to be the pursuit of *Bhakti*, not merely as the means of liberation, but as pure sense of oneness with the Supreme. The notions of '*Saguṇa Bhakti*', i.e. devotion towards the Divinity with 'form' or personified and '*Nirguṇa Bhakti*', i.e. devotion towards Divinity without 'form', '*Sakāma bhakti*', i.e. devotion aiming at fulfilling some particular desire in mind, and '*Niṣkāma bhakti*', i.e. devotion without any desire are some notions which are of importance for understanding the nature of and also the stages in the development of *bhakti*. At the same time, the trends such as *Śaiva*, *Vaiṣṇava* or the devotees of Goddess are also some notable aspects in the study of *bhakti*. Even though lot of discussion centers round Kṛṣṇa and his devotees, the above-mentioned trends are and have been prevalent since ancient times and the same enigmatic questions that Daya Krishna has raised about the relation between Kṛṣṇa and *Gopīs* are applicable to these trends too.

There is also found a strong tradition of expressing devotion through the service to the living creatures. Many devotees work with the

slogan – ‘Service to Humanity is Service to Divinity’. And this is not merely a contemporary phenomenon; Sant Tukārām from 17<sup>th</sup> Century says in one of his poems – ‘The one who has empathy for the people in misery is the real devotee and it must be realized that the God stays with that devotee’. So service to Divine is through service to suffering humanity is the form of devotion is understood by saintly persons in earlier times too. In the contemporary period, this form of devotion has taken a shape of various cults. Of course, this fact is not free from problems and gives rise to one question – ‘Is *bhakti* a collective or mob activity or is it a personal matter?’ Activities focusing on offering service may involve many people, but does the same applicable to *bhakti*?

As the emotion of *bhakti* is trans-empirical and beyond discursive logic, it goes without saying that it gives rise to various mysteries and calls for serious philosophization of itself. And in this process of decoding *bhakti*, one riddle emerges and needs solution – are two dimensions of *bhakti*, viz. *bhakti* as a pathway to liberation and *bhakti* as the final goal so different from each other? The followers of either of these forms experience that the two merge in each other, maybe as a natural process. It is quite possible that one may begin to follow *bhakti* for some higher pursuit. One rises to higher and higher stages of it. And in the course of its refinement, one surrenders to the God so unconditionally that there doesn’t remain any other exterior goal for him/her. Is this a pathway to liberation or is it itself a goal? And how can the demarcation be done? This is the real riddle of *bhakti*.

### Notes

1. Bhakti in the genuine sense, is regarded as a sublime feeling, of the form of immense love and all external demonstrations of this feeling are regarded as only ritualistic and in fact ‘unnecessary’ for the real bhakti as such. The advocates of ‘*bhakti*’ prefer treating it as a private phenomenon and any manifestation of it in public domain is generally treated as inferior. However making a distinction between a true ‘*bhakta*’ and a pseudo ‘*bhakta*’ is a challenge and that is mainly because of the fact of its being a private phenomenon.

2. Sant Gulabrao Maharaj belongs to the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra. He lived during 1881-1915. There is ample literature available on him and written by him too. For an account of his life and spiritual journey, see *Madhurāchārya Śrī Jñāneśvarakanyā*.
3. Dr. R. D. Ranade was a propounder of the path of Mysticism and has produced a scholarly works on the literature of saint tradition in India. His works such as *Mysticism in Maharashtra* and series like *Pathway to God in Kannada/Hindi Literature* gives elaborate accounts of *bhakti* traditions in India.

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## Daya Krishna's Critique of Bharata's *Rasa* Theory, Aesthetic Experience and *Adhyāsa*\*

Asha Mukherjee

### **Abstract:**

In Indian tradition, *Rasa* theory was developed by Bharata Muni in *Nāṭyaśāstra* (2nd Century B.C.). *Rasa* is as an aesthetic experience, primarily of audience, or of the reader, that means essence. It means what is tasted or felt. It also means aesthetic enjoyment, referring to the creative experience of the poet and the essence of the totality of qualities that make the poem a poem. *Rasa* in the Indian tradition is not identified with the idea of universal truth or with the ideal to be realized. Bharata's *rasa* theory that has been generally accepted in the Indian context, according to Daya Krishna, does not apply to various art forms and the rich aesthetic experiences. For him, the differences between different art forms are of utmost importance. Daya Krishna in his article "Rasa – The Bane of Indian Aesthetics" strongly argues against Bharata's *rasa* theory that has been accepted unquestionably, does not recognise the plurality of art forms and this has done a great harm to India's thinking about arts. This article, in the section I, presents a brief discussion on the *rasa* theory and aesthetic experience following G.B. Mohan Thampi, K. C. Bhattacharya and Radha Kamal Mukherjee.<sup>1</sup> Section II critically examines Daya Krishna's arguments against the *Rasa* theory one by one.

**Keywords:** *Rasa* Theory, Indian Aesthetics, Aesthetic Experience, Creative Thinking, Transformation and Transcendence.

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### Section I: *Rasa* Theory

Let us first try to understand briefly what *rasa* theory states. *Rasa* theory was first formulated by Bharata and later developed and enriched by Ānandavardhana in *Dhvanyāloka* (9th Century) and Abhinavagupta in *Abhinavabhāratī* and *Locana* (10th Century). In English, two words, 'artistic' and 'aesthetic', are used in this context, artistic refers to the act of production, but aesthetic refers to the perception and enjoyment. The term '*rasa*' also has various uses in various contexts, and the meaning ranges from alcoholic *soma*-juice to Brahman. *Rasa* also refers to the "reader's aesthetic experience, the creative experience of the poet and the essence of the totality of the qualities which make a poem what it is" (Thampi 75).

What is the relation between the artist and the work of art created by the artist or the art and life? The artist is a part of the world with his own experiences, feelings, and emotions. Due to some emotions strongly felt by the artist (either in mind or materially), he responds to the situations and environment by writing the poetry or creating a work of art called "objective correlatives" to use Eliot's phrase. It is said that the poet or the sculptor or the "painter does not express, he only suggests", and the suggestion is the soul of the artistic interpretation as emphasized by Ānandavardhana in the *Dhvanyāloka*. Indian artists 'suggest' rather than 'depict' inner visions and experiences together with myth and legend. And the quality of such suggestions is judged by *Rasa*, which in Indian poetics is called *alaukika*, which does not belong to this world. The foundation of such a view is that the aesthetic value cannot exist unless the individual's heart with good taste transcends to the impersonal delight. A clear distinction is made between the ordinary life emotion and the emotional content of aesthetic experience.

*Rasa* includes the continuity of the poetic act from the birth of the poetic experience in the poet as a seed to the reader's enjoyment as a tree. *Rasa* theory was to understand all arts we find in the civilization in its long history, although it was rooted in reflections on *nāṭya* (play). Bharata discusses other arts – particularly dance and music – where the defining characteristic is 'feeling' and 'emotion', and *nāṭya* includes all the forms of arts. But, if all arts are to be understood in their emotional meaning, having their *prayojana* (purpose), it would be a craft and not arts, to borrow Collingwood's distinction between art and craft (see Collingwood). Art is not just learning the tricks or skills, but the craft is to learn the tricks, techniques, and ways to achieve the goal. Bharata did not ask what the ideal seeking involved in the creation of *nāṭya* or of any other art is. The act of creation that brings the art into being and the object created both are the object of reflection. Is the "object" created, like other objects we know of, such as pot or cloth? These are some of the questions which are not discussed much in *rasa* theory.

Emotion means “to stir and move out.” The emotions stir and agitate the artist and the observer both. A feeling is a disturbance, an agitation in the consciousness that tends to result in artistic action. The observer engages in the imaginative reconstruction of the meanings and identifies with the artist through active participation and enjoyment of the emotions in the heart. There is a presence of emotions, but in the artistic experience, we “distance” from the sensual emotions. They are non-ordinary emotions, they are relished, and they help us free ourselves from being a slave of emotions. Ordinary emotions generally are chaotic, blind, and powerful. Indian art, in this sense, is neither naturalistic nor realistic, yet it has a relation with reality – the fundamental human experience called aesthetic experience is in an environment or *loka*.

The main question is how significant is the difference between the various art forms from the aesthetic point of view. From *Rasa* theory point of view, there is hardly any difference, and all arts are like *nāṭya* (play).

The primary aim of art (meaning any art), according to *rasa* theory, is to transform and consolidate the transitory desires and emotions into the nine or eleven major permanent or universal moods and sentiments (*rasas*) that underlie their abstract, metaphysical and cosmic character. Thus moulding and transforming through imagination and feeling and the abstract sensations leading to universal form, Bharata distinguishes between *lokadharmi* (realistic) and *nāṭyadharmi* (abstract) mode of treatment of emotions, stressing the latter desirable; thus, abstraction is considered as an essential aspect of Indian aesthetics.

Krishna Chandra Bhattacharya (KCB), while explaining this character, makes a distinction between the levels of feeling in aesthetic experience. On the first level, no distinction is felt between the enjoyment and the object, and the contrast between the subject and object becomes obscured. But on another level, the direct object of feeling is another feeling, a feeling of the feeling, for example, in the case of sympathy or enjoyment of a child for a toy. The child’s enjoyment with the toy and my enjoyment of having sympathy with the Child’s joy of the toy would clarify this difference of levels. The object of my feelings and the object of child’s feelings are different, and enjoyment is also different. The second level involves my imagination of a child’s fascination with the toy. But artistic enjoyment is at the third level that does not belong to any one of these levels (Bhattacharya 348-363).

Some thinkers have argued that the distinctive character of Indian aesthetics is that it is connected with metaphysical and aesthetic considerations rather than religious and theological nature. It is concerned with the absolute reality through modes of feeling and experience (*rasas*), serene and awesome, charming and repellent. Indian art, through sculptures, paintings, etc., aims at the revelation of metaphysical truth and sublimity rather than sensuous delight and realism. According to Abhinavagupta the whole process of image-making,



rituals, and contemplation are linked with the realization of the values of life (*puruṣārtha*) – *dharmā*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*. There is a kind of dialectics involved in the human soul, whose enlightenment is understood and realized as a transcendence of the various pairs of opposites such as compassion and terrific, love and hatred, etc. All antinomies resolve in truth, values, and sentiments at the metaphysical sphere. By entering into the cosmic plan of life, one realizes the Absolute as transcendent (*alaukika*) and universal (*sādhāraṇa*) *rasa*, getting all opposites juxtaposed – a revelation of metaphysical reality by art. An example of “proper integration of mind, personality, and society saturating them with a thrill of exaltation, harmony, and rhythm (*chbandomaya*) is the function of all true art” (Mukherjee 96).

Often delight and tragedy are considered as paradoxical as there cannot be a delight in tragedy. For Greeks, life did not make much sense, but tragedy as an art form did. The tragedy was meant to seek understanding and purpose in otherwise purposeless existences – to understand that need is felt to touch the universality of life. But if we understand the *rasa* theory, it should be clear that there is no contradiction between them. The poetry creates a world of emotions where the reader identifies oneself by transcending the real-life emotions and participating, which are non-ordinary emotions and this is the reason drama always gives delight to the spectator, never sorrow.

### ***Rasa*: Personal as well as Transpersonal**

Bharata in his *Abhinavabharatī* devised music and dance to remove personal feelings as may arise in the minds of untrained and uncultivated spectators. The detachment is an essential part of the aesthetic experience. The divisions in literature into tragedy, comedy, lyric, etc., are necessary and can be made on the basis of the content and the manner of treatment. In aesthetic theory, when we discuss the effects of poetry as poetry, the distinctions between the kinds of literature have no value. The sense of *visrānti* – rest or composure is important, and the feelings of sorrow or pleasure are collaboration; it is only the non-ordinary feelings that matter in the poem from an aesthetic point of view. Poet's own experiences, if presented as experiences, would only be documented from his autobiography rather than the poetry. To objectify an experience, the poet has to detach himself as a subject, and once he objectifies it through appropriate correlates, the experience becomes universal. The personal experience becomes transpersonal, universal – accessible to all *sahṛdaya*. This dual-nature process is called *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*, trans-personalization, as, under this process, the personal becomes universal. The theory requires the elevation of the consciousness of the poet and the reader from everyday life to the collective human experience. One may take a clue from contemporary experience for the creation of art, but detachment from the mundane experience is a necessary requirement. On the one hand, the causality of the work of art affects the art in our practical life and

on the other, it demands detachment on the part of the artist. *Sādhāraṇīkaraṇa* does not require universalization in the sense of abstraction; it must have the potential of being felt by everyone who has human qualities. Aesthetic experience is the experience of the universalized aesthetic object by the universalized subject in the state of perfect bliss (*ānanda*) due to the prominence of *sattva*. This is the reason; aesthetic enjoyment is considered as the supreme bliss of Brahman-apprehension. We can note an emphasis on the relation between the aesthetic experience and the spiritual states of consciousness. Radhakamal Mukherjee has argued that,

[The] nine *rasas* of Indian fine arts have their ultimate derivation from the three different basic attributes (*guṇas*) that according to Indian thought enter into the making of human personality, *sattva* (purity, universality, and impersonality whose expressions are silence (*sānta*) and compassion (*karuṇā*); *rajas*, i.e., dynamic creativity whose expressions are love (*śṛṅgāra*), valor (*vīra*) and laughter (*bāsyā*); and *tamas* or ignorance, unbalance, and inertia, whose expressions are wonder (*adbhuta*), fury (*raudra*), loathsomeness (*bibhatsa*), and awesomeness (*bhayaṃkara*). One can easily see the correlation with the Supreme Being as Creator, Preserver and Destroyer, and *Paramesvara* Himself as *nirguṇa*. (92)

The following section will focus on Daya Krishna's arguments against *Rasa* theory and responses in defence of Bharata's *Rasa* theory taking one by one.

## Section II: Daya Krishna's Critique of *Rasa* Theory

The arguments presented by Daya Krishna in some of his writings discussing *Rasa* theory, art, and aesthetics are discussed briefly. For the sake of clarity, I try to give them a title with the hope that the points raised by Daya Krishna would be focussed, although most of them are interwoven with each other.

### Argument I: Argument by Radical Differences, Truth, and Imagination

In his article "Arts and the Cognitive Enterprise of Man", Daya Krishna argues against the basic presuppositions of *rasa* theory and says 'there is no unique art but arts'. There is 'no absolute Unity of the body of truth yet crying to build into unity'. Taking a clue from Abu Sayeed Ayyub, Daya argues that "there are radical differences between poetry, literary forms, and other arts more profound and deeper than sciences" (217). We have verbal arts and non-verbal arts. We have representational art and non-representational art. We may judge their quality based on how much they are representational. Art is basically imaginative, and therefore there is hardly any truth in the sense of mirroring reality. Art is supposed to mirror or reveal reality, transform it in a deeper sense,

and transcends it. The truth of imagination is the truth of art. But the answer to the question, what is the truth of imagination itself is pretty tricky. Undoubtedly, the truth of art concerns the truth of lived life of man, which science cannot capture. Daya Krishna raises an interesting question "if the man was only mirroring the reality (*drastā* and *kartā*), can there be any art in the Indian sense?" The answer is clearly – no. Therefore, "art presupposes a being who is essentially a *bhoktā* that suffers, enjoys and lives through the pleasure and pain of human being." Yet, arts are essentially related to imagination ("Arts" 219-20).

Interestingly, religion forms a substantial part of arts; religious themes form as most art forms. "Art and religion both start with imaginative entities and both if the successful, result in their concrete actualization transforms personality" like in most religions ("Arts" 224).

### Defence

Daya Krishna presupposes that *rasa* theory, by definition, is not a cognitive or truth-claiming exercise and is just a judgment of taste. Also, that *Rasa* is not an 'objective' ascription, truth claiming, inter-subjective, validating without explaining the relation of whole and parts in the context of *Rasa*. I am somewhat surprised to see this criticism coming from Daya Krishna, being sensitive towards various forms of arts, knowing fully well that the *Rasa* is the total impact of the whole, taken all parts together and not just some parts. In classical Indian music, any sensitive listener knows very well that each note played by an artist has an important role; yet the whole *rāga*, the way it is played, is responsible for the *Rasa*. After all, the *rasa* theory is a theory of all these great experiences of arts, and parts are taken together in the context of the whole.

Moreover, there is not one kind of truth. There are different kinds of truths in different fields, depending on the reality of the fields. The kind of truth available in mathematics, for example, is not available in morality. If one mixes the field such as astronomy with poetry, then this creates confusion – "[O]ur life encompasses many different forms of reality, and reason should enable us to go from one to the other" (Roy). Moreover, one may ask, can mirroring be a reflection that is only static, or can it also be like a reflection in a river that is in flux, like a flow of water in the Ganges that changes. If it is static mirroring the reality, it will lead to some kind of truth and validity, but if the mirroring of reality is taken in a flux then only arts become meaningful for the artists as well as for the audience.

The language of expression of *Rasa* is an important question, especially when it is feeling and imagination-centred, but life experiences are equally important. It is true that it is not an easy task to express what one feels, yet artists try to express what they feel, and art is the best example. All art forms are language forms to express what one feels. In creating art, the creator enjoys the work, gets *Rasa*, and as an artist, may strongly feel the demand of morality, using

the language of art as a powerful tool to convey. In this context, the situation's 'moral appropriateness' becomes a subject matter of *Rasa* for the reader and/or for the spectator. What Rāvaṇa feels about Sītā could have been an example of *śṅgāra* as well, but within the context, it is considered by Bharata a matter of *rasabhāṣā*. The artist is dealing with life experiences and the imaginations, ideals, values, and 'oughts'; therefore, moral considerations are always relevant in society for the arousal of *Rasa*.

Art presupposes a *drastā*, *kartā* and also a *bhoktā* and not "essentially a *bhoktā*" as Daya Krishna argues. An artist who creates is not only rooted in his life experience, feeling and imagination but also fulfilling a demand and enjoying his work of art.

### Argument II: No Place for Demand in *Rasa* Theory

In another article, "Freedom, Reason, Ethics and Aesthetics" Daya sees the 'beautiful' as a constraint on human freedom as its 'felt fulfilment'. Still, not much attention has been paid to this 'felt' constraint – if it is. It may be called a demand, a demand to be fulfilled, and human freedom is limited by the 'freedoms' of others, not one but innumerable. Self-consciousness involves the desire to know oneself and also to transform oneself. But how can one transform oneself into what one is not? One has to transform into what one ought to be. Transforming the world which is nearer to our desire or to the values that one cares is known to everyone, but unless one tries to become better, the world cannot become better.

### Defence

The basic question is how one can become better by aesthetic experience? And what is the meaning of becoming better? If *Rasa* can be taken to mean aesthetic enjoyment in Bharata's sense then can it give us pleasure? John Stuart Mill, the Utilitarian, talks of "quality of pleasures" as people enjoy lot of things, their food, their holidays, their music, their work, computer games, etc. After all, what makes all these activities enjoyable? Collingwood talks of entertainment value and the belief that the value of art lies in its ability to entertain us, 'art as amusement', but according to him, the 'art proper' cannot be defined as amusement (Collingwood, ch. 3). For Mill, higher pleasure is of a different quality. For Bentham, the pleasure in art is not only more concentrated and intense but it can be substantiated without loss of the more items affording a lower pleasure such as art by food that I like. Mill is of the opinion that it would be absurd to accept that the quantity of pleasure alone is the criterion; instead, he suggests that quality of pleasure would also be considered as an important aspect to judge the higher or lower pleasure. The famous passage says:

It is better to be human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied. And if the pig, or the

fool, is of a different opinion, it is because they only know their own side of the question. (Mill 14)

But Mill's account is not helping us much as the strategy of Mill's majority test cannot be used to explain the difference in the value of serious and light art or entertainment. Taste differs in art, too; therefore, the test he proposes cannot be used to judge the responses to kinds or quality of art. The majority opinion among those who have seen both plays, we still have no reason to infer from this that the works of Shakespeare generate a higher quality of pleasure than Kālidāsa's. The majority test may only inform that they have a preference for Shakespeare. We cannot show that fish is better than chicken simply by showing that more people prefer fish. The fact that people really enjoy drama than dance drama does not make the dialogue any more sophisticated. Following Mill, we would say that the higher pleasures involve higher faculties which make them of a higher quality and applying this to art implies that serious art engages aspects of the mind that lighter art or entertainment does not address.

One can argue in defence of *rasa* theory that all great art – literary, musical, visual, dramatic, make a considerable demand on us of attention and concentration, whereas lighter art is hardly demanding.

There is also another kind of demand in *Rasa* theory.

Beauty is subjective, but it is not merely personal, as a preference when someone is fond of something. In declaring something as beautiful, we think we have a 'reason for demanding a similar delight from everyone'. Thus, an aesthetic judgment is distinguished as one that falls between the universally necessary (or logical) and the merely personal. Art is not design. Nor is it purely fanciful. Aesthetic judgment arises from the 'free play of the imagination. In Kant's words, an aesthetic judgment is 'disinterestedly free' or "purposefulness without purpose" (Kant §10). When I find something beautiful, it is purposeful, but it does not have some specific purpose that might make it useful to me. Kant postulates a 'common sensitive nature' among humans, which is not the same as shared knowledge about the objective properties of classes like water satisfies thirst. If this were so, it would lose the distinctive aspect of aesthetic judgments, their subjective freedom. When I say the flower of cactus is beautiful, I am not placing it within a general category of 'beautiful things' as I place water under lifesaving things.

Therefore, a special delight arises from 'the free play of the imagination on an object' – this object could be a picture, a statue, a poem, a piece of music, or even nature such as it could be a sunset, a mountain peak, or a rose as Rabindranath Tagore would insist.<sup>2</sup> Natural objects seem as fitting an object for aesthetic delight as anything an artist might create. For Kant, too, aesthetic judgment is applicable to both art and nature.

### Argument III: No Place for Plurality of Arts in *Rasa* Theory

In another significant article, “*Rasa* – The Bane of Indian Aesthetics” Daya Krishna’s objections against the *Rasa* theory need to be seen as arts with aesthetics due to its ‘*rasa* centeredness’. “The concept has remained central in all thinking and has never been questioned or criticized or critically evaluated for its adequacy for the understanding of all the arts which the civilization pursued in its long history” (“*Rasa*” 119). Daya Krishna is of the opinion that *rasa* theory reduces aesthetic experience to emotions alone which is not acceptable. At the end of the paper, Daya strongly argues:

There is also the history and plurality of the particular art form, which also has to be considered. The *rasa* theory is just incapable of doing this. It is time to forget it; it has already done great harm to India’s thinking about arts, and the effects this has on the creation of artworks in this country.... Whatever the resistance, cultural or otherwise, the arts and the thinking about the arts has to be rescued from the millennium-long *adhyāsa* superimposed on it by Bharata’s authority, and the unquestioning way it has been accepted till now. (“*Rasa*” 135)

Daya argues with utmost details that Bharata was reflecting on the *nāṭya*, which was his main concern, and it cannot be accepted to be applied on all the art forms which have nothing to do with the representation of the human situations in the context of which Bharata explicitly defined it and which dramatic performance was supposed to portray. It is, of course, true that Bharata discussed – even in substantive detail – other arts, particularly dance and music, but always as subservient in the depiction of the mood or rather the ‘emotional feel’ of the situation seen as defining and constituting it, and not as something independent of it, having a world of its own, with its *puruṣārtha*, autonomy, and values which had only an accidental relation to human situations as portrayed in the play. What is most surprising is that subsequent tradition accepted what he said. To see every art form in the context of *nāṭya* or *kāvya* and not as autonomous and independent art is “not only injustice but fails to understand that which pervades, encompasses, and envelops them all” (“*Rasa*” 119-20). Bharata misleads thinkers into treating all arts as being a craft – human situation to be understood in terms of ‘emotional meaning’ it has, and not the ideal value or values it pursues in terms of meaningfulness, in relation to the larger world like nature, transcendence, and one’s self.

What role language plays in *Rasa* should have been discussed in relation to *kāvya*. Is a poem an artistic construction, or is it just a play of words – a craft? On the one hand, overuse of *alaṅkāras* destroys creativity (we have ample examples in Sanskrit poetry), and on the other, mimicry is not *nāṭya*. The step from *nāṭya* to poetry and poetry to music would have shown how *Rasa* is ‘contingent to the experience’ and not essential as Bharata thinks (“*Rasa*” 130).



But the tradition was so strong that it saw poetry and music as subservient to *nāṭya*. The tension between the word-independent and word-dependent forms has not been noticed; the musician gives meaning to his feelings or emotions and conveys them as best as he can, for example, in *khyāl*, *swara-tān*, formation, the choice of wordings and *ālāp* depends on the musician. Various forms of classical Indian music like *Bhajans*, *Thumris* have a different flavour, where the words and their use with particular feelings play an essential role.

### Defence

Why Bharata did not distinguish between the different forms of arts? According to Bharata, *Rasa* theory also seeks the transformation of consciousness by freeing it from all objectives, leading to truth and power in freedom, and does not simply 'substitute for gross sensory pleasure'. It is unfair and stretching too far to interpret Bharata's *Rasa* as simply sensory pleasure. Granting that it may have its inbuilt contradictions, such as the theory, was about arts created by man, having its reality, alongside something 'really real' and yet evolving a 'consciousness cantered concept'. What distinguishes art from non-art and the specific differences between one art and the other arts? Such questions are simply not asked as there are no distinctions between the *Rasa* from different art forms, precisely because the actual human level differences are transformed and transcended at the level of consciousness. Daya Krishna rightly argues that strictly speaking, the only *Rasa* that remains at the level of consciousness after withdrawal from all 'objectivities' is *adbhuta* or *sānta*, which is added by latter theoreticians as the '*mahārāsa*'.

Later additions of *sānta* and *bhakti rasa* to the list of *Rasa* may not have corresponding human situations whose *anukarāṇa* or *anukṛiti* can give rise to them, yet the 'feeling relationship' with ultimate reality is essential in *bhakti* and instead of destroying the distinction between 'art' and 'reality' one identifies with the ultimate reality in appreciation – the ultimate creativity – as *līlā* – *adbhuta* associated with *vismaya* as 'art creations'. Art creates an objective world, in the sense that it is a source of all *rasas*, though imagination-cantered, shared by *sahṛdaya* people. One can witness and experience various art forms centering Kṛṣṇa, Rāma, Hanumāna, Śiva, Pārvatī, Jagannātha, Mīrā, and Jayadeva in various languages and cultures all over India. This is a distinctive character of Indian aesthetics. One can see how 'objective' is almost in all art forms; almost everyone participates and feels the reality by one's inner experience, yet only a *sahṛdaya* can access such experience. All the creativity just around one character Kṛṣṇa is enough proof of such objectivity. The highest ideal of spirituality and not just the emotional meaning as Daya Krishna sees is indeed one essential aspect of *rasa* theory in Indian culture. *Rasa* experience (*anubhūti* of *Rasa*) initiated by Bharata is not autonomous; it is related to other *seekings* or values like *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*. The ideal of *mokṣa* is very much related to or part of *bhakti* and *ānanda* (bliss).

Further, both word-independent and word-dependent art forms have *Rasa* of different kinds and have the same name as arts; why should it lead to confusion? The person who has experienced the *Rasa* knows very well the difference between the two. There is hardly any confusion. *Rasa* theory is not just a theory without experience; it is a theory with aesthetic experience; to detach the two as Daya Krishna is doing would be a mistake. *Rasa* theory is not like mathematics or philosophy ‘freeing oneself from human sensuousness’; art is inevitably sensuous due to its very nature.

We must also realize that the forms of artistic enjoyment and entertainment are becoming more and more sophisticated over the centuries. What would have amused *Śakuntalam* during Abhinabagupta must seem a very poor form of entertainment to a generation reared on films and television programs like *Mogli* or *Tintin*. These are far funnier than the comic scenes in *Śakuntalā*, *Mṛcchakatikā*, or *Mudrārāksasa*, and it is only a dogmatic commitment to the belief that great art gives great pleasure that could lead us to deny it. After all, the aesthetic experience also needs to be cultivated to appreciate the art. The development of science and technologies has given to many different forms of arts in contemporary times, and people are being exposed to such arts; the meaning of ‘arts’ and ‘aesthetic experience’ is also continuously changing along with the different forms. And *Rasa* theory, though developed in the context of the play, is applicable to them if understood in the right spirit, no matter what the form of arts is.

The development of science and technology in just one last decade has made a revolution in the art world. The art scriptures, in London, “London Booster” by David Cerny, Czech artist that was made to welcome the 2012 Olympics, “A Giant Baby” statue of a seven months baby, in the garden of Singapore by Marc Quinn, Antony Howe’s mobile art due to wind melting design, “Melting Women Face”, “Floating Tab” in Spain – tab floating in the air, “K On Sun” from Kafka’s Head 45 tons continuously moving in Prague (Czech Republic) by David Cerny, “The Disappearing Sculpture” made in steel by Julian Voss-Andreae, “Kinetic Rain” sculpture in Singapore airport 7.3 meters in height, “The paper Kinetic Sculpture” made from paper developed by solar cells by Matthew Shlian and wooden sculpture by Derek Huggar.

The aesthetic experiences in the above art forms and many more to come in the future can all be understood within the *rasa* theory if interpreted properly within the context. *Rasa*-theory is applicable to all art forms and not just play as Daya Krishna in his provocative style of questioning has argued. One needs to pay much more attention and sympathetic study to the *rasa* theory and apply the theory in all these different contexts. But it is true that in the West, poetry and painting has been taken to be the paradigm of all the arts. And in Indian tradition, plays were taken to be the paradigm of all the arts. But this does not imply that all other forms of arts are rejected by *rasa* theory. But to do



this would be as distorting as it would be to insist that all the sciences must be modelled on physics. Therefore, Daya Krishna's argument that *Rasa* theory has no place for other forms of arts cannot be accepted.

#### Argument IV: *Rasa* Theory Being Human-Centered

Human beings immerse in feelings and emotions, but the 'enterprise' of human life is never just that. Man seeks something beyond what he is, something more than just feeling or emotion, and the creation of art itself is evidence of this, just as his enterprises in the field of 'knowledge and action'. The hedonistic perspective of art is completely missing in *rasa* theory which is also part of Indian tradition – man is defined by what he 'seeks' – he seeks what he is not but ought to be. Neither Bharata nor anybody else asks what man is seeking in art, what is the *prayojana*, what is *niḥsreyṣa*. Bharata's definition of *Rasa* was also not contested. Work of art is not a natural object by definition as it is 'created'. Abhinavagupta raises the issue in *Abhinavabhāratī*, but why it could not be classified as other objects is not discussed. Further, *nāṭya*, unlike other arts, has some written text, as text is to be performed as a play. Actors try to give it a 'living' reality based on *anukṛti* (acting) using senses – can be seen by eyes and can be heard by ears. It has a sequence of acts, scenes, beginning and end, rise and fall with opening and closing. But the '*anukṛti*' based on real-life would not seek *Rasa*. How can *anukṛti* be understood as a reality which it is not – it is copy created, *anu-kṛti* by definition is that which real-life-looks like reality but it is not; it is *adhyāsa* or *aropita* reality (superimposed reality). People accepted this *Rasa* theory, believed in it, and lived their cultural life within Indian tradition that validated itself "the subtle inter-influencing of art and life has seldom been reflected upon" (Krishna, "Rasa" 122). There are arts that have nothing to do with human situations and Bharata's theory cannot be applied to them in principle. Daya gives an example of *dhvani* and *alamkāra*, which cannot be accommodated within the theory of *Rasa*, though most of the thinkers have presupposed that they can easily do it ("Rasa" 122). Different forms of *nāṭya*, *nṛtya-nāṭya*, and music and dance are considered important in *rasa* theory as they are *abhinaya* centred, *Rasa* centred.

It is further argued that adding music and *nṛtya-nāṭya* to *nāṭya*, the sole purpose was to enhance the 'emotional being' of the scene enacted by the actors on the stage. But

[T]he mistake lay in his 'understanding' of the *loka*; of which it was to be an *anukṛti* or *anukarṇa*, or even *anukartana*, the terms that Bharata himself has used. The *loka* constituted by 'human beings' is not only 'feeling-centered' but also centered in 'knowledge' and 'action', which have only tangential relation to 'feeling' and which, in any case, can never be defined in its terms. The *loka*, thus which Bharata is supposed to be concerned with, is not 'actual' *loka*, but an idealized abstraction of persons in interaction whose life is centered

in the feelings they feel and who have nothing else to 'do' in their lives. (Krishna, "Rasa" 124)

*Rasa* theory reduces aesthetic experience to emotions alone which is not acceptable.

### Defence

In a play, actors have to depend upon a script, yet the artists find scope in the realization of the work that relates to certain aspects of the play. The plot, the dialogue, and the number of characters are all laid down by the play writer, but the characters remain incomplete. It is the task of the actor to complete his play on stage or screen. Traditionally, in Greek tragedies, actors used masks, maintaining the difference between the actor and the part they played in the play but in modern times, masks are no more used, and the actor has to fuse their own person with that of the imagined or whose part(s) is being performed. During the performance, the actor must *be* the character. Yet, in one sense the character is not a real person, and the actor is. In *rasa* theory, it is called *anukṛti*. For the audience, the actor is an image, a product of *Śakuntalā*. The actor realizes a whole personality – an imaginary person, in fact, always maintaining a balance between a person and a non-person.

In the West, it was Kant who developed the line of inquiry to its most sophisticated level in the idea of 'the aesthetic' as a distinct contemplative attitude revealed in the activity of the mind that dwells upon, for example, the form and color of a rose (example used by Kant himself). Later, however, aesthetics came to focus almost exclusively on humanly created art, and indeed it may be said that, thanks to Hegel, aesthetics and philosophy of art became synonymous or co-extensive. The rise of environmental philosophy and 'environmental aesthetics' in the twentieth Century raises some doubts as to whether nature is or is not a proper object of aesthetic judgment.

For Kant, the antinomy between the subjective and objectivist account of beauty was a major concern in *The Critique of Judgment*. Experience of pleasure or pain cannot be rational or irrational. For Kant, aesthetics gives a special kind of pleasure since in some sense the individual transcends the mere individual preference. Aesthetic pleasure or pleasure in the beautiful is something we can expect others to experience at the same time as ourselves. That does not mean that we share the pleasure that is to be found in beautiful things, but it means that pleasure in the beautiful is a pleasure; it is proper to commend to others. Therefore, appreciating the beautiful is an act of mind as well as a matter of sensuous feeling, and that is why it is correct to speak of aesthetic judgment. Kant agrees with Hume to a certain extent that 'this is beautiful' has an appearance of a cognitive judgment that 'cannot be other than subjective' but he rejects the view that experience of beauty is merely subjective as this is not how it seems to us:

[The person who declares something to be beautiful] can find as reason for his delight no personal conditions to which his own subjective self might alone be party ... [and therefore] ... must believe that he has a reason for demanding a similar delight from everyone. Accordingly, he will speak of the beautiful as if beauty were a quality of the object and the judgment logical ... although it is only aesthetic and contains merely reference of the representation of the object to the subject. (Kant §6)

The aspect of human experience that we explore with the assistance of great music is not that of emotional or intellectual life but the experience of hearing itself. Active listening with passive hearing ('disinterested' in Kant's words) is one aspect of the self-consciousness that makes human existence what it is.

*Rasa* can only be enjoyed by human, and only human beings find the *loka*, including the artistic work, beautiful. If Mozart died in infancy, nobody would have composed "The Magic Flute". The works of art are created by the artists and enjoyed by the audience, just as in the field of morality Hilary Putnam has shown that the values are entangled with facts (see Putnam), using KCB's words, one can say, "Artistic enjoyment is conceived not merely as *free* from the entanglement of fact but as realization of an eternal value as an identification with the aesthetic essence without loss of freedom" (355). The formal characters like symmetry, unity, harmony, varieties that ordinarily taken to constitute beauty do not really make a painting beautiful or a work of art beautiful, it is the intuition of the artist and the artistic feelings that make a work of art an art and there is no such thing as beauty in the object that determines the aesthetic feeling.

#### **Argument V: Argument for Clarity – Whose *Rasa*?**

Daya Krishna asks the question what Bharata is talking about when he is talking about the *Rasa*, is it actor's *Rasa* or spectator's *Rasa* and says,

The *rasa* certainly cannot be behind the curtain: neither the director nor the actors could possibly have seen that way in the innumerable rehearsals that had preceded of 'feel' the impending result of their efforts in that manner. In fact, even the successful enactment of the play would hardly be said to produce any *rasa* in them unless the feeling of relief 'that it was all over,' be said to be that. ("Rasa" 124)

#### **Defence**

This argument, to me, seems to be unfair criticism as actors also get *Rasa* in the hard labor they put in rehearsals; the pleasure and pain both are part of *Rasa*. *Rasa* is all-encompassing; anyone who has gone through the process as an actor would never agree with Daya Krishna. Yes, the *rasa* theory applies to the actors and spectators; it applies to the play as written as well as to

the play enacted. The concept of *sabrdaya* which Daya calls ‘misleading’, is also taken by him in a very narrow sense; it is not just in the sense of ‘responsive’ or ‘in tune with what was going on the stage’. Bharata is using this concept also in a sense Daya expects – the cultivation of sensitivity-infinite plasticity of emotions and feelings, on the part of individuals. One may call this as Keats called it ‘negative capability’ not only essential on the part of a creator but also on the part of readers and viewers with long self-training or self-learning, sometimes even the possibilities which were not even imagined by the creator or the writer. All this falls under the category of ‘*sabrdaya*’ and much more. After all, the sensibilities also need training; indeed, long training – the greater the work of art, the greater are the demands of sensibilities on the writer as well as on the spectator. The experience and transcendence both are demands of sensibilities and part of *Rasa* and indeed the audience thus, is not a ‘raw’ audience, a ‘*tabula rasa*’ but ‘culturally trained, critical judge of the performance’. Bharata captures all this in his concept of ‘*sabrdaya*’ – the cognitive, critical dimension, the continuous process of criticality and appreciation, sometimes failing and sometimes succeeding – we can think of innumerable examples. The obvious example that comes to my mind is the play “Dakghar” written by Rabindranath Tagore and its enactment in India and in various countries, including Poland.

Kālidāsa’s play *Śakuntalam* is an excellent piece of art, and to ask ‘what is the *rasa* in this play?’ would be simply missing the point *rasa* theory is making. One *Rasa* may be dominant (and there could be a difference of opinion), and some or all other *Rasa* may also be present; it all depends on the context. *Rasa* cannot be seen in a disjointed way; it has to be seen in totality. One cannot, either in practice or in theory, answer this question once for all ‘what is the *rasa* in this play?’ But all said and done, Daya Krishna may be correct in arguing that *Rasa* theory, “in spite of its prestige, was not used either by the critic or by the creator to seriously reflect or evaluate the work was being produced in the realm of *nāṭya* in this country” (“*Rasa*” 128). Certainly, it needs much more serious attention by the contemporary Indian scholars.

To conclude, philosophizing is also an art and an example of creativity for Daya Krishna. Does it have aesthetic experience? Daya would happily grant this though he accepts that the demarcation or classification between art and non-art will always be ambiguous and arbitrary. For him, “the roots of creativity including in thinking are unknown and perhaps unknowable in principle” (“Thinking versus Thought” 32). He often uses the expressions such as “creative philosophizing”, and one of the books is titled “Art of the Conceptual” using creativity in the domain of thought. Daya Krishna, focuses on the thinking process and says, “Thinking is the second level of creative activity” (“Thinking Creativity” 20), and “Thinkers are conceptual artists” (“Thinking Creativity” 22). He also talks of the “cognitive” trouble of the author that “stir” to come out (“Thinking Creativity” 21). Further, whatever

the author writes at a particular point in time, it always remains incomplete; it is always tentative. The questions that are raised always remain questions, and the answers suggested by any author are always tentative. The reader, when he reads the question, becomes *his* question, and the problem becomes his problem, and he tries to answer it as a reader. Reader, while reading, walks along with the author, joining the process of thought “whose beginning no one knows and whose end no one can foretell” (“Thinking Creativity” 21). In this interesting sense,

[T]hinkers are conceptual artist. They deal with concepts and create new worlds of concepts by giving prominence to one concept rather than another. They bring concepts into being or change old concepts by bringing them into a relationship with other concepts.... (“Thinking Creativity” 22)

Emphasizing on the similarities between the arts and the art of the conceptual, Daya Krishna says:

[J]ust as a work of art is an invitation to enter and live in, at least for some time, a world that is more meaningful than the world we ordinarily find ourselves in, where necessity is minimized and freedom is maximised, the same is within the art of the conceptual. (“Thinking Creativity” 25)

Daya Krishna grants that this freedom can be of different sorts, and the differences between the arts and the works within the same art form may be seen in terms of the freedom they embody and the possibility they seek to actualize. Thus there is a continuous dialectic interplay between freedom to enter the work that art creates and the necessity to come out and return to the ordinary world. In this sense, the work of art is an invitation, and so is the art of the conceptual. The *a priori* condition for fostering creativity in the life of the mind, for Daya lies in the belief that every human being is capable of entertaining a new thought, of asking a new question, of seeking a new problem. Once raised, the questions remain forever. Also, we need to ask can Bharata's *rasa* theory be applicable to such aesthetic experience from the art of the conceptual. How far the aesthetic experience in the conceptual (thinking) is similar to the aesthetic experience of different forms of art needs to be looked into and for the time being left for a later discussion.

Daya's classic style of philosophizing is exemplified in the field of art and aesthetic experience also through his various writings – looking for *adhyāsa*, dilemmas, paradoxes, and contradictions in thought, basically inviting everyone to think and raise new questions. He draws our attention to an interesting dilemma that is faced in Arts – “It is wedded to the sensuously ‘felt’ and ‘lived’ life of man, but also that it has to please, attract and ‘entertain’ without which it cannot have a ‘life’ of its own” (“Rasa” 132).

\* An earlier version of this article was presented at Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy, 50th Annual Conference, June 8-11, 2018 on “Power of Creativity” hosted by Pedagogical University of Cracow, Poland.

### Notes

1. Mukund Lath, a very close friend of Daya Krishna has responded in his own way to various debates related to *Rasa* theory and aesthetic experience during more than three decades, but it is not included in this paper due to obvious reasons and left for some other occasion.
2. For a detailed discussion on the relation between the aesthetic experience and the sensual experience in the spiritual and in nature with reference to Rabindranath Tagore, see Roy.

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## Philosophy and Daya Krishna

R. S. Bhatnagar

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### **Abstract:**

Daya Krishna experienced the compulsion of raising the question about the nature of philosophy quite early in his philosophical career. The concept of philosophy is interlinked with the concept of philosophical problem on the one hand and with the form of philosophical analysis on the other. According to Daya Krishna, a problem is not an item among other items that we may list in the world over there. A problem exists as an object to a conscious being. Moreover what is problematic to one conscious being may not be so to some other. Contradiction or paradox is often a motive force to reflection. However, it is often the case that what seems contradictory or paradoxical to one does not appear so to the other. But to say that philosophical problems are generated by contradictions or paradoxes would be to narrow down the nature of philosophical problem on the one hand, and permit unwanted cases to be treated as philosophical problem on the other. For, there may be problems that may not involve contradiction or incompatibility and may yet interest the philosopher, while it is obvious that non-philosophical disciplines are not bereft of contradictions and incompatibilities.

**Keywords:** Nature of Philosophy, Philosophical Problem, Cognitive Activity, Hegel, Kant.

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Perhaps it is in the very nature of philosophy that anyone who takes it seriously feels compelled at one time or the other to raise the self-reflective question: What is the nature of philosophy? It seems that Daya Krishna experienced this compulsion quite early in his philosophical career and that is why his first major work is devoted to the nature of philosophy itself. The source of this compulsion can be traced in the factual situation which characterizes the discipline of philosophy. As Daya Krishna points out at the beginning of his book *The Nature of Philosophy*, though reason has been the 'organ of philosophy', it has seldom enabled the philosophers to be convinced of each other's arguments (2). Not only do few philosophers agree with each other in respect of the nature they propose relating to the various problems of philosophy, they do not agree even about the very function of the discipline (7-8). This situation has not at all changed since *The Nature of Philosophy* was written. Hence a discussion on the theme of the nature of philosophy is as relevant today as it was then. On this occasion it would be only appropriate to discuss this question in the light of Daya Krishna's view.

The concept of philosophy is interlinked with the concept of philosophical problem on the one hand and with the form of philosophical analysis on the other. According to Daya Krishna, a problem is not an item among other items that we may list in the world over there. A problem exists as an object to a conscious being. Moreover what is problematic to one conscious being may not be so to some other. Contradiction or paradox is often a motive force to reflection. However, it is often the case that what seems contradictory or paradoxical to one does not appear so to the other. Unless the incompatibility is *felt*, a problem hardly exists. "The dismissal of any problem as abstract, therefore, means either that we do not feel the incompatibility or that we do not think the incompatibility to be a problem" (218). But to say that philosophical problems are generated by contradictions or paradoxes would be to unnecessarily narrow down the nature of philosophical problem on the one hand, and permit unwanted cases to be treated as philosophical problem on the other. For, there may be problems that may not involve contradiction or incompatibility and may yet interest the philosopher, while it is obvious that non-philosophical disciplines are not bereft of contradictions and incompatibilities. So, unless something very peculiar is shown to characterize philosophical problems it would be hard to distinguish them from the problems of other disciplines. Interestingly, what is peculiar to philosophical discipline, as Daya Krishna points out, is the enigmatic fact that this itself constitutes a problem as to what is or what ought to be construed as a philosophical problem. "The existence of a problem, however, is itself a problem" (21). Philosophical problems are different from logical problems on the one hand, and from scientific problems on the other. Scientific problems are related to some state of affairs – possible or actual. Consequently they are capable of direct or indirect verification. A problem of logic or mathematics is not concerned with any

state of affairs and hence is incapable of being tackled by empirical verification of any sort. Its structure is formal and its resolution calls forth coherence rather than verification (222). Philosophical problems are neither concerned with state of affairs and so with verification, nor are they concerned with logic or form and coherence (222-24). Philosophical problems arise because of conceptual confusions. They require conceptual analysis for their resolution. This, Daya Krishna claims, “has been the essential nature of philosophical thinking in the past and in the present” (229).

The philosophic activity is peculiarly parasitic upon a particular type of confusion. The confusions are conceptual, i.e. are of such a nature that they can be resolved in no way other than that of conceptual analysis. The resolution gives us freedom from the problem, i.e. from philosophy itself. Philosophy, therefore, lives in the clarification of its own confusions, a clarification that is its own death (229-30). Fortunately, the temper of a philosopher is such that he is hardly ever in a state in which he is not bothered by one confusion or the other.

And so philosophy is a never-ending enterprise in a sense (231). Another important and distinctive feature of philosophy is that it has been acclaimed as knowledge (1). It is neither a matter of emotion nor of action. “It is a cognitive activity *par excellence*” (215).

Negatively, Daya Krishna rejects the belief that philosophy can give us final and absolute knowledge about the ultimate real or the “really real”. He examines and finally rejects what he takes to be the presuppositions which have motivated western thought. The presuppositions are – the nature of ultimate reality is such that it can be discovered by pure thought; and that philosophy gives us knowledge which is final and completely valid. These presuppositions are said to be inter-related and are ultimately connected with the problems of reality, knowledge and value. The first three are different facets of the same belief; that is, philosophy is a discipline which gives us access to the real and the knowledge we so attain is valid and final. If these beliefs are rejected one cannot and, according to Daya Krishna, one should not, approach philosophy with the hope to find something really real or a method which would infallibly lead to it. As he concludes,

It is time that philosophers dispel the general impression that they are on intimate terms with Reality with a capital R, and hobnobbing terms with the Absolute and the God Almighty. The philosopher should not don the false plumes of the shaman, the priest or the prophet. (233)

Thus the philosopher is neither supposed to prescribe for the world nor is he supposed to describe it as a scientist.

I hope that the above is a faithful, though sketchy, account of Daya Krishna’s concept of philosophy as delineated by him in *The Nature of Philosophy*. Now, as must be evident, the notion of ‘conceptual’ or ‘concept’ and the notion

of 'cognitive' are central to Daya Krishna's characterization of philosophy. On both these notions much more needs to be said than done in the work referred to, before the explication of the notion of philosophy can be said to be reasonably satisfactory. So let us first ask, what is to be understood by a 'concept'? Let us consider the concept of man. What do we understand by such a concept? Suppose one proposes that M answers concept of man. Philosophically, mere assertion of M will not be adequate at all. One would like to know how one can validate or justify an answer of this sort. One line of thought may be that we see whether M answers the demands which might be raised regarding the concept of man in the light of one's own experience. At the pre-reflective level some relevant awareness is already present. So what comes to the surface when the issue about man is raised is a more precise articulation of experience already encountered at the pre-reflective level. The articulation in terms of concept, while involving rational apparatus with linguistic nets, may generate all those problems which constitute the dynamics of conceptual analysis. While one demand or constraint on conceptual explication may be derived from the pre-reflective experiential source, the other can be traced to the demand for conformity to some ideal pattern or form. This tension between *is* and *ought* may be said to characterize the life-blood of thought. The point to note here is that the explication of the concept will involve a reference to experience in the widest sense of the word and thus would include a reference to the empirical. Similarly, though the idea of form or essence may remain as vague as 'pre-reflective', it serves as a spur to thought in the direction of more and more precise articulation. I am not sure if it is this kind of activity of thought which is implied in the acceptance of non-finality or non-absoluteness of the object and the method to know or realize it.

The articulation associated with conceptual explication involves the processes of both identity and difference. Perhaps it is here that one may look for the source of laws of thought. An interesting aspect of the process is its intimate connection with reflection, with forms, with contours, with limits, with definitions. The process comes to an end only as a pause. Constant interaction with the world both at the physical as well as the thought level gives the process further impetus. Reification, forms, limits, boundaries, etc., keep on getting blurred, making fresh attempts in the same direction imperative. And thought moves on. In a later paper on comparative philosophy Daya Krishna seems to attribute an instrumental character to concept, not unlike the one proposed here. While writing about the choice from amongst various conceptual structures, he describes them as "tools for organization of experience and for giving meaning and significance" (*The Nature* 120). The level at which thought or thinking operates with concepts as its tools is highly generalized. It enables any matter to become an object for thinking. A level below, one might introduce all kinds of differentiation within the range of immense objects. The point may be illustrated by an example from the history of thought itself. Kant introduced a dichotomy

between phenomena and noumena, between knowing and thinking, between practical and theoretical, and so on. Hegel introduced the notion of concept itself to make it possible to treat all these divisions as objects of thought at the same level. In fact, Kant was *actually* operating at that level while making and providing for those distinctions. An example of this is his use of the word 'concept' for space and time which are not concepts at all as he shows in his "Aesthetics". Hegel somehow assimilated both consciousness and its contents within the same stream. Whether this constitutes an advance over the Kantian position or not is not the issue. What is important to note, is the fact that it seems necessary to allow for the possibility of that something being treated in some preferred way. 'The level of concepts' eminently fills the bill. Perhaps it is in this sense that the subject matter of philosophy cannot be rigidly defined. Any aspect relating to experience, and thus any matter relating to human activity, practical or theoretical, serves as the datum for the philosopher. Thus, what would distinguish philosophy from non-philosophical disciplines is the level of generalization associated with concepts themselves.

Let us now ask, what is meant by 'cognitive'. In "Philosophical Theory and Social Reality" Daya Krishna writes, "It is a common presupposition of cognitive enterprise that what is real and is sought to be known is independent of the beliefs of man" (28). At the same place he adds that the determination of 'truth' and 'falsehood' is so "central to the cognitive enterprise" that without that "it can hardly be regarded as making any sense at all" (28). In other words, a philosophical statement must in some respect reflect some aspect of reality or the world there and must be capable of being true or false. Now, as already noted, it is not the business of the philosopher to describe the real. He is also not concerned with ordinary verification or confirmation of some fact at the empirical level. If this is so how shall we incorporate the notion of truth or falsehood unless these notions are assigned some function other than the normal one?

If the philosopher is also not concerned with reality what possible sense could be attached to the cognitive demand that the object of knowledge must be independent of the beliefs of man?

Now, a philosopher is supposed to be concerned with concepts. Can it be shown that the demands of the cognitive enterprise have some application in respect of concepts? Can a concept be treated as an object independent of the beliefs of man? Is it right to think that a concept or a sentence in which something corresponding to a concept be a part, could be true or false? If these questions cannot be answered in the affirmative, conceptual reflection cannot deserve the designation of being cognitive. While there is some sense in thinking that a concept can be independent of the beliefs of man as an object of thought, it will have to be distinguished from the reality which may be intended to be encapsulated by it. Besides, the designations of truth and falsehood would be inapplicable to a concept as

concept. A concept can be said to be adequate or inadequate. It would sound odd if one were to speak of a concept as a true concept or a false concept. Then, what is the sense of saying that philosophy is a cognitive enterprise? Is cognitive to be understood in some extended sense?

When we think of cognitive we think of various different aspects of conscious experience. The experiences include not merely an understanding of things there, but also our reaction to them, and our volitional attitudes to them. It seems that conscious experience has a pivotal role in cognitive affairs. Such an awareness would also be concerned with itself. Thus conscious activity will have two nodes, one extending outward towards the object, the other receding towards the source, that is, consciousness itself. In another paper, "God and the Human Consciousness", Daya Krishna seems to accept the idealist tradition while accepting that "to be conscious, for man is to be self-conscious, and to be self-conscious is to be aware of the "Other" in relation to which one becomes aware of oneself" (1). In fact, we come very close to the Hegelian concept of philosophy when we find Daya Krishna characterizing philosophy in the following way:

Philosophy at the deepest level ... is the self-articulation of reason....  
("Philosophical Theory" 33)

The life of philosophy is the life of reason and the life of reason is the life of objection and counter-objection ... philosophy is culture become self-conscious of itself; and self-consciousness, as always, is not critical of what *is*, but reaches out to what *can* be or even what *ought* to be. ("Philosophical Theory" 34)

However, consistent with his dynamic concept of philosophy, Daya Krishna would not like to think of philosophical enterprise ever coming to a finale. For him philosophy which is a "dialogue of reason with itself" is as unending as "the life of the Mind or even, to a certain extent, the life of the Spirit" ("Philosophical Theory" 37).

The notion of cognitive gets a wider dimension when to the notion of truth is added another entirely different notion of truth – 'transformative truth'! In an attempt to assimilate arts to the cognitive enterprise Daya Krishna accepts a wider range of the use of the word 'truth':

Truth, in the first instance, may be defined as that which mirrors reality or, in other words, represents it as it is. On the other hand, truth is also conceived as that which not merely reveals reality but also transforms it, and in a deeper sense, transcends it. ("Arts" 219)

Further in the same paper,

[U]nless the transformative and transcending aspects of truth are kept in mind equally with those that are usually regarded as informative or

descriptive, it would always be suspected that the arts have no cognitive function at all. ("Arts" 224)

Does recognition of the transformative and transcending aspects of truth commit one to postulate eternal verities? So far as *The Nature of philosophy* is concerned this question seems to take us out of the narrow confines in which philosophy is conceived there. Obviously the belief that there are eternal verities to be known by the philosopher is rejected there. The notion of transformative truth seems to be connected much more with some sort of becoming of being rather than with corresponding to something. The notion of truth seems to function more as a beacon than as a terminus. Writing on comparative philosophy Daya Krishna remarks, "the cognitive enterprise is as unending as any enterprise, and though the truth-claim has inevitably to be made it is equally certain that it shall remain unfulfilled in time" (*The Nature* 13). The cognitive enterprise extends not merely to the entire life of reason and consciousness but comprehends the flights of spirits too. The very structure of self-consciousness compels the spiritual seeking of man which informs the spirit of religion itself. The objective that is sought is the most real, i.e. God ("God" 10). Is it not the top which at some moment philosophers including Daya Krishna himself refused to climb because of its rarified atmosphere or at the worst thinking that there was no top to climb to?

The characterization of cognitive needs is to be distinguished from the imaginative. In many respects what goes on in the name of cognitive activity – perceiving, constructing, experimenting with different forms and configurations – seem to be as much imaginative as cognitive. Moreover, imaginative is also connected with consciousness in a wider sense. Perhaps imaginative is not so self-conscious an activity as cognitive. We might hold that imaginative is cognitive under certain constraints. These constraints reveal the nature of reason itself. Answers to 'what' and 'why' questions have to make sense in terms of rational constraints. Man, while submitting himself to the call of reason, has to struggle to keep his other facets in a subordinate position and thus has to effect some sort of transcendence within himself. This, of course, is the demand of the cognitive enterprise as a whole. In philosophy, as we have noticed, the cognitive enterprise has to go on at a generalized level. The necessity to rise to this generalized level and the necessity to transcend are intimately connected, and enable the foundational search to be possible which is so distinctive of philosophy.

Another important aspect relating to the cognitive enterprise is its role in the life of an individual. It is commonplace to say that cognition is essentially a human affair. It would not make sense if it were not preceded by the lack of some kind of awareness of illusion and so on. Further, if the cognitive enterprise does not modify this kind of awareness and does not place one in a more satisfactory state of mind, it cannot be supposed to have mattered. Considering the usual informative level it is familiar to everyone what it means to be more

knowledgeable. However, given the wide connotation of cognitive, it remains no more obvious in what way an individual who is engaged in the cognitive enterprise is better off than the one who is not.

Even if we do not institute an evaluative comparison between a philosopher and a non-philosopher it would be still sensible to ask why philosophy should be placed among the various desirables. Of course, philosophy does not add to our information. The sciences other than philosophy and various arts and techniques need information and process it according to their own specific objectives. When information becomes an object of philosophical reflection it is usually dissociated from the usual pragmatism. Elevated to the level of concept, its particularities and specificities remain no more relevant for reflection. Let us think of the proverbial 'table', '*ghata*', or '*pata*' that have served as objects of discussion in the context of epistemology. Philosopher did not ask how they were made or what was the purpose for which they were made. They were interested in them as objects of knowledge, as every student of philosophy knows. Were they independent of the knowing consciousness? How at all could one establish that what was grasped by the consciousness had some correspondence to something there? These and allied questions were related to the wider question of appearance and reality and that again was related with some vital concerns of human life.

Once the inquiry relating to these questions itself becomes an object for philosophical reflection, questions of logic, language *vis-a-vis* reality acquire an interest of their own. The process goes on. The question, however, is what is interesting here and why at all one should go in for it. Philosophy, being the life of reason itself, and reason being involved in its own articulation, one may think that philosophical reflection or inquiry is inevitable. If this is so, then raising the above question would be like asking why one should be interested in life or what is life good for.

There is something more to it, as we gather from the various remarks Daya Krishna has made in some of his writings. In his "Comparative Philosophy" he writes that "ultimately it is the arguments given for certain position that are of interest to a philosophical mind" (82). Lest one gets the impression that philosophy is merely an intellectual game, we add another remark from the same paper: "as a human enterprise it is bound to be concerned with what man in a particular culture regards as the highest good for mankind or as the *summum bonum* for man" (77). In his paper on "God and the Human Consciousness", where he analyses the structure of self-consciousness in relation to the concept of God, he points to an ever-seeking spiritual quest which signifies man's encounter with God, his quest for his true self and truth, the realization of beauty and the actualization of good (6). If we take the unending search towards the most real ("God" 10) as continuous with the philosophical quest, then philosophy could be characterized as a process which endows meaning. As Daya Krishna writes,

[T]o give shape to thought, to provide it with the terms of its own articulation, to lay down the norms of meaningful discourse, and at a larger remove, of meaningful living itself, are some of the things that philosophy does and in doing so, shapes social reality both in its actual and in its ideal aspects. ("Philosophical Theory" 35)

The constant claim that philosophy is a continuous and never ending activity does not obscure the fact that philosophy cannot be dissociated from basic ontological and epistemological concerns. A philosopher may not be a priest or a scientist but he cannot disown his responsibility to engage himself in a rational quest into the nature of the highest human seeking on the one hand and an explication of the human situation *vis-a-vis* existence in its totality on the other.



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## OBITUARY



Nilima Sharma (1938 - 2021)

One of the founder editors of GUPJ (from 1993 to 2003) along with Prof. Dilip Kumar Chakravarty, Prof. Nilima Sharma had been a serious teacher of philosophy. She served the Gauhati University Department of Philosophy for a long span of 35 years. Prior to that, she also served in Cotton College of Guwahati and Lady Keane College of Shillong. Nilima Sharma had an amiable personality which brought her close to her students. She had a personal approach to their problems, both academic and non-academic, with special attention to every one individually.

Nilima Sharma had special proficiency in Existentialism as well as in Indian philosophy. One of her works, *Twentieth Century Indian Philosophy* is a much acclaimed book, especially by the student fraternity throughout India. Her other areas of research included the philosophy of Sankaradeva, the iconic Vaisnava saint of Assam. Her book *Rethinking Sankaradeva's Philosophy in 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (2017) is a unique approach to explore the philosophical footing of Sankaradeva's literary works. Apart from the one mentioned, Sharma also published two more books on Sankaradeva – an anthology edited by her, *The Philosophy of Sankaradeva: An Appraisal* (2008), and another of her own, *Mahapurush Srimanta Sankaradeva* (2014). Because of these, and many other contributions in both English and Assamese

languages, highlighting Sankaradeva's unique contributions to philosophy and literature, she was awarded the prestigious "Srimanta Sankaradeva Bota" (2017) by Auniati Satra.

Nilima Sharma also was a well-known name in the literary circle of Assam. She penned a number of short stories and novels in Assamese which were acclaimed by critics. A few of her short stories were translated into English, Hindi, and other Indian languages. Asom Sahitya Sabha, the premier literary organisation of Assam, honoured her with a prize, "Basanti Devi Bordoloi Bota", as recognition to her literary talent.

A hardcore academic she visited Italy under the India-Italy Cultural Exchange Programme and delivered lectures in several Universities in Naples, Turin and Venice. She was also a member of Indian Council of Philosophical Research (ICPR), New Delhi, from 1998 to 2001.

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